



ROBERT FLEMING .VDM.

Author of the Apocalyptical Key.

Published as the Act directs Mar. 9. 1793. by G. Terry. 54. Pater Noster Row.



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APOCALYPTICAL KEY.
—
AN EXTRAORDINARY
DISCOURSE
ON THE
RISE AND FALL OF PAPACY;
OR THE
POURING OUT OF THE VIALS,
IN THE
REVELATION OF ST. JOHN, Chap. XVI.

CONTAINING

Predictions respecting the Revolutions of France; the Fate of its Monarch; the Decline of Papal Power: Together with the Fate of the surrounding Nations; the Destruction of Mahometanism; the Calling in of the Jews; the Restoration and Consummation of All Things, &c. &c.

By ROBERT FLEMING, V.D.M.

Ἀληθεύοντες ἐν Ἀγάπῃ, Ἀυξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὅς
ἐσιν ἡ κεφαλὴ, ὁ Χριστός. Eph. IV. 15.

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L O N D O N:

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN LORD CARMICHAEL,

*Principal Secretary of State for the Kingdom of
Scotland, one of His Majesty's most Honourable
Privy Council, and Chancellor of the College of
Glasgow.*

MY LORD,

THE honour I have in being related to your Lordship, and the happiness I enjoy in being acquainted with You, do not only encourage me to prefix your Lordship's Name to the following Discourses, but allow me also to believe you will not take it amiss that I do so.

And since You have so lately laid me under new Ties to your Lordship, in designing my Promotion to so considerable an Office, as that of Principal of the College of *Glasgow*; I find myself obliged to lay hold on this first Opportunity of declaring to the World the grateful sense I have of so great and undeserved a Favour; and the rather, because my Circumstances have not allowed me the satisfaction of complying with so kind and generous an Offer.

But seeing it is to my own loss and disadvantage only, that I have declined so very honourable and beneficial a Place, and that therefore I must be supposed to have acted thus, from Considerations of another nature: I know your Lordship will judge, from the

true regard You have to Conscience yourself, that some straitening circumstances of this kind must have been (as indeed they were) the only *Remora*, that prevented my being so happy as your Lordship designed I should; and that therefore You will not be displeased with me for what was not my Fault, but my Misfortune.

I am not made for Flattery, and I know your Lordship is above it: And therefore I shall not say any thing here by way even of just Encomium; because as your Character is so publick that it needs it not, so your Modesty is so great, that I know any attempt of this kind would be unwelcome and uneasy to You.

I shall therefore only tell your Lordship, that, as I question not but You have the good Wishes of all honest Men that know You; so I reckon myself peculiarly obliged to beg of God, that You may long be preserved, jointly to serve God and your Prince, the Church and your Country, with the same unshaken Constancy, unbiassed Fidelity, and unspotted Reputation, that You have hitherto been honoured to do.

Which, and that God may bless You and your Honourable Family, with all Spiritual and Temporal Mercies here, and with Eternal Felicity and Glory at last, is and shall be the earnest and constant Prayer of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most obliged,

and most obedient Servant,

ROBERT FLEMING.

A N
EPISTOLARY DISCOURSE
CONCERNING THE
RISE AND FALL OF PAPACY.

To all my true and good Friends every where ; but more particularly to the Worthy Gentlemen and Others that compose the Church to which I am now related as Minister.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

IN compliance with the frequent and repeated desires of a great many of you, I suffer the following Discourses to break loose from their Fellows, to take their Fortune, as we use to say, in the wide world. And, seeing the Candor of so many of my Friends has made them think they might not be unuseful; I must therefore expect that they will, from the same Principle, defend this Publication of them, against the censures they may be supposed to fall under both from open Enemies and pretended Friends. For, though it be a common and as it were threadbare Argument, to plead importunity in this case; yet it is sufficiently known to several of you, that if it had not been for this, the World had not been troubled with any thing further of this kind from me. For as I am sure no Affectation to be more known or taken notice of, has influenced me to present these Discourses to publick view; so I do suppose
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it is not unknown to some of you, that retirement from this noisy and vain World has ever been the sum of my Ambition, excepting when publick Work and Service has obliged me to shake off the beloved Fetters of so dear a Confinement.

I shall not therefore say more as to the following Essays, than to tell you (what many of you know already) that as the *First* of the *Discourses* that follow this *prefatory One*, gave rise to the publishing of the *Second*, so the *Second* gave occasion to the printing of the *Third*. And therefore, seeing the late Opportunity of preaching, when we entered into our new Meeting-place here in *London*, Sept. 29, 1700, did induce some of you to desire the Publication also of that Sermon I preached when I entered upon the Pastoral and Ministerial Work among you, *June 19, 1698*; the same Occasion has given birth to the last additional Discourse, which some remember I made, when I was solemnly set apart to the Ministerial Office, *Feb. 9, 1687*, which I have the rather consented to print now, because it doth not only suit with the second Discourse, but because I remember several false or at least imperfect Copies were taken of it, when I did at first deliver it.

And seeing the last Discourse (which yet was first, as to time) doth now appear in the view of the World, I found myself in some sort, obliged to interest *all my Friends* in this prefatory Address: Wherein I do particularly include those of the *English Church of Leyden*, and *Scots Church in Rotterdam*, to whom I stood related successively as Minister or Pastor: whom I do the rather mention here, that I may let them know, how much they are still upon my Thoughts, though we are separated as to place.

But seeing my Work is now more particularly appropriated to *you*, whom I am more immediately concerned with and related unto at present, I do therefore, in a more special manner, address myself to *you*
at

at this time. And I hope ye will bear with me, if from my sincere respect for your Welfare, I detain you a while here before ye enter upon the perusal either of my *Apocalyptical Thoughts following*, or the *other Discourses*, which I do present you with, at your own desire. For in case either of Death, or being otherwise rendered incapable to serve you, I am willing to give a vent to my Thoughts and Affection at this time; that whatever comes of me, the following Discourses, together with this, may stand as a lasting Witness of my real concern for your Souls welfare.

In the *first Place* therefore, I do declare, that though I am not willing to state my Sufferings upon little matters or Modes of Worship and Expression; yet I can sincerely say, that should the Divine Providence call me to lay down my Life for the *Truths themselves* which I have preached among you, I hope I should be so far from quarrelling with the Procedure of God this way, that I should rejoice in such a Martyrdom. And, I hope I have not contradicted in my Life what I have preached in the Pulpit, whatever my Infirmities have been. So I presume it will not be looked upon as Pride or Vanity, if I say with the great Apostle (though as to the last clause I dare not pretend to have been any Pattern to you) *Finally Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable,* Phil. 4. 8, *whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do: and the God of Peace shall be with you.*

For in the *next Place*, I thank God, that he that knows the Secrets of all Hearts, doth testify together with my Conscience, that a sincere concern to be useful to our *common Christianity*, was the thing that did at first influence me to enter upon this great Work of the Ministry, and hath ever since engaged me, though
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under more discouragements than most Men, to continue and labour in it. So that it is matter of sweet Reflection to me, that I never gave any occasion to brand our Holy Profession with the odious Name of Priestcraft; whatever any others may have done. For, as I have had no other Ambition, than to engage and draw Men over to the Great and Catholick Interests of Christianity itself, in order to their becoming the Followers and Servants of our Glorious God and Blessed Saviour; so I am sure I can confidently say, without any Vanity or Affectation (for which I dare appeal not only to you, but all others that have known me ever since I began to preach) that there is not one in the world that ever had just occasion so much as to think, that I did at any time attempt to bring any Person over to my way, as a Party. And, as thus I have been far from seeking either Honour, Interest, or Popularity; so there are not a few that can bear me witness, that I have incurred the censures of some Men of very different Denominations, because I could never be induced to think that Religion did properly stand in the Rituals of any of the contending Parties.

The Differences therefore, but especially the Animositities, that are among Protestant Christians, have ever been grievous and afflictive to me. And to heal these I could chearfully be offered up a Sacrifice, if I can be supposed to be conscious of the Sentiments and Movements of my own Soul. For though we of this Congregation differ from all others that dissent from the Episcopal Communion, in this, that we are, in a peculiar sense, upon a National Foundation, *viz.* in as far as we not only own the same Church-Government, but keep up the same way that the church of *Scotland* useth, in her publick Administrations; to which most of us belong as Natives, and all of us as Profelytes: yet I must publicly own, that abstracting from this, I am a Dissenter from that Party that in-

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gross and monopolize the Name of the Church of *England*. For though I have ever looked upon other Controversies as more edifying and momentous, than those unhappy ones, that have kept that great Body and ours divided; yet I have so far considered them, as hitherto to find no reason to quit that way I was educated in; notwithstanding the specious reasons made use of to prejudice People against us as *Schismaticks*, rather than to convince us that we are so.

Therefore in the *third Place*, I cannot but own (without any design to reflect upon them that differ from me in such matters) that I look upon that way as nearest to the Christian Institution, that has the fewest and most natural and unaffected, and consequently most spiritual Rites and Ceremonies, in the performance of Gospel-Ordinances. For as a Learned * Conformist says, in a Book which he did afterwards indeed seem to differ from, but never attempted to retract or refute, and perhaps was never able to do:

“Certainly the primitive Church, that did not charge
 “men with such a load of articles, as now in these
 “latter ages men are charged with, would much less
 “have burdened Men with imposing doubtful prac-
 “tices upon them as the ground of church communion.
 “There is nothing then that the primitive church de-
 “serves more imitation in by us, than that admirable
 “temper, moderation and condescension which was
 “used in it towards all the members of it. It was
 “never thought worth the while to make any standing
 “laws for rites and customs, that had no other original
 “but tradition, much less to suspend men from her
 “communion for not observing them.” And if this
 was the Practice of the primitive church, it was emi-
 nently so in the apostolical age; to whom, as acted Acts 15.
 by the Holy Ghost, it seemed good to require no- 28, 29.
 thing by way of imposition, but a very few necessary
 things,

* Stilling. Iren. page 122, and 68.

things, viz. that Christians should abstain from Idols, Blood, things strangled, and Fornication. But alas! since that time it hath seemed good to men (but I am sure not to the Holy Spirit) to impose a great many unnecessary things on the consciences of others; without any such allowance as was given them, that every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind, in what he did. For what regard have some men to this apostolical Rule, when their impositions are laid as stumbling-blocks in their brethren's way; without any regard to the wounding of their weak Consciences, upon the supposition they are so? Is this, to imitate the Apostle's tenderness, who resolved rather never to eat Flesh, than to offend any weak brother? Or do men this way seek the things of Jesus Christ, or their own private ends and emoluments most?

Rom. 14.
5.

Rom. 14.
13. &c.

1 Cor. 8.
12.

1 Cor. 8.
13.

Phil. 2.
21.

Therefore let men dispute about forms and ceremonies, and their decency or necessity, as long as they please; I must say, with * a reverend conforming minister: "That all the art and power of the world cannot make trifles in the worship of God, seem matters of importance to them that relish Heaven. What trumpery are habits, various gestures and postures to a man that is swallowed up in the contemplation of the infinite Majesty of the glorious God? or that is lost in the ravishing admiration of his goodness and love? or that is sunk into the lowest abasements and self-abhorrence for his sins? Such a soul may be loaded with human inventions, but he can never look upon them as ornaments or helps to devotion."

Whatever then be the various ideas and theories of what we call edification: yet still, as none can dispute us out of what we receive most advantage from, as to our bodies, so neither as to our souls. For if no man can be able to persuade me, that his constitution of body is such a standard to Mankind, that I and all others

* See P. M. in his *Vanity, Mischief, and Danger of Ceremonies*, proposed to the Convocation, and printed Anno 1690.

others are obliged to reckon that food most healthful for us, which the imposer tells us is so to him, though at the same time we experience it to be noxious, or disagreeable to us: I know no more reason, why any man should pretend a power of imposing modes and forms on my conscience, which I am dissatisfied with, from no other reason but this, that they appear to be the most excellent or decent to him. So that, as liberty is equally necessary in the one case as in the other, unless we value the health of our bodies above the peace of our consciences and security of our souls: so the contrary practice, when force is used, can admit of no softer term than that of anti-christian tyranny. I cannot therefore but highly approve of what I find in a * book I have already mentioned: "What possible reason can be given, says the author, why such things should not be sufficient for communion with a church, which are sufficient for salvation? And certainly these things are sufficient for that, which are laid down as the necessary duties of christianity by our Lord and Saviour in his Word.

I mention these things, God is my witness, for no private design, to uphold a party, or to serve the ends of it, as such; but to let those that are prejudiced against us know, that we are acted by religion as a principle, and not as a notion only: and that this is the reason of our dissent from those that share the emoluments of the Church among them. Otherwise it were not probable, that we should unite, in acting contrary to our own interest, merely from faction or humour, if we may presume to know our own sentiments; and I hope most, if not all of us, durst not dissemble before the great God all our days, in a matter of so great importance as this is. So that the dissenting of so many persons from the established church, to their own hurt and disadvantage in the world, may be looked upon as no contemptible argument, by unbiassed persons, that there are some

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* Stilling. Iren, pref. page 8.

men that are acted by religion as a principle, and that take up the ministry otherwise than as a trade.

But I had this further design in touching upon our unhappy differences; that considering that they do only concern the externals and circumstantial of Religion, both ye and all others that peruse these Lines and the following Discourses, may be taken off from that Fury and Bigotry, by which so many seem to be possessed at this day, and may learn to mind the great Essentials of Christianity more, acting conscientiously yourselves in all things, and judging charitably of those that differ from you, whether they do so of you or not. For what I have said on this Head, is not in the least designed to reflect upon those that differ from us, among whom I acknowledge there are many distinguishable, not only for Parts and Learning, but for Piety and Moderation also, upon which accounts I cannot but honour and love them, though they should both despise and hate me. Nay I question not, but even many of the Bigots for Cathedral Worship and it's annexed Hierarchy (who are for running up these to as near a conformity to *Rome* as they can, and yet stamp all with a confident pretending to a *Jus Divinum*) may act from Conscience, even in their uncharitableness to them that conscientiously differ from them, yea in their Hatred of them, and Rage against them where they have Power. But then it must be remembered, that as their Zeal is not according to knowledge: so they are of the same Tribe with those, of whom our Saviour speaks, when he tells us, *that they would persecute, yea kill his Servants*, when they had opportunity, *believing at the same time, that they did God most acceptable Service*. But he immediately adds, *And these things will they do because they have not known the Father, nor me*. However my design is not to reflect even on them, but rather to pity them and wish them more knowledge and a better mind.

John 16.
v. 3.

For

For as a contentious and especially a persecuting temper, was never from God, nor according to the Rule of the Meek and Holy Jesus; whose Religion is *first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated*: so such a Disposition was never more unseasonable than at this time. For they must be unaccountably unobservant of, and unconcerned with the present State and Posture of Affairs in Europe, who see not in what Danger the Protestant Interest is at present; considering what it has lost already, and is in hazard of losing further; together with the sad decay of true Christian Piety, as well as Unity, among all sorts of Persons. I could therefore wish we might learn a little Prudence, even from our Popish Adversaries, that we might unite in Love, and in design to promote a general Interest, though we attain not to an exact Uniformity in all things. For why should not we join as one Soul against that *Bloody and Idolatrous Party*, when we see them do so against us? though their various Sects and Orders, such as *Franciscans and Dominicans, Jesuits and Jansenists*, differ as much from one another both in their Opinions and in their Form and Habits, (as they are regimented under their several Heads or Generals, and as they live according to vastly different Laws and Rules) as we can possibly be supposed to do. But alas! what Moral Prognostications have we now, but such as seem to portend Ruin and Misery to us? when we see the Differences of Parties grow up into a stated hatred, with a fixed design to ruin one another, and consequently murder the Reformed Cause, which we are obliged not only upon religious Accounts to appear for, but even upon Civil Considerations, seeing Popery is inconsistent with *Freedom and Liberty* than which nothing, in this World, ought to be so dear to us. Can we have forgot what Barbarities that inhuman Party have committed in the World?

For

For if we may believe Historians, * says a Learned Man; " *Pope Julius* in Seven Years was the occasion " of the Slaughter of 200000 Christians. The *Mas-* " *sacre* in France cut off 100000, in Three Months. " *P. Perionius* avers that in the Persecution of the " *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*, 1000000 lost their lives. " From the beginning of the *Jesuits* till 1580, that " is, thirty or forty Years, 900000 perished, saith " *Balduinus*. The *Duke of Alva* by the Hangman " put 36000 to Death. *Vergerius* † affirms that the " *Inquisition* in 30 Years destroyed 150000. To all " this I may add the *Irish Rebellion*, in which " 300000 were destroyed, as the *Lord Orery* reports " in a Paper printed in the Reign of *Charles II.*" And how many have been destroyed in the late Persecutions in *France* and *Piedmont*, in the *Palatinate* and *Hungary*, none I believe can fully reckon up, besides those that are or have been in the Gallies, and that have fled. This is that *Idolatrous Harlot*, so glutted with the Blood of the Saints, that a late Author, in his Treatise of Convocations, sets up as a Pattern to the Church of *England*, and that another Author in his Book, intituled *the Case of the Regale and Pontificate* (to the scandal of the Church of *England* for whom they pretend such a Zeal) would so fain have us united unto, and represents therefore in such favourable Colours. But I hope all true Protestants will easily see *the Snake in the Grass*. And surely when we are in hazard of being betrayed within ourselves, we have sufficient reason to awake out of our Lethargick Sleep, that we may do what possibly we can to save the Nations we belong to from approaching Desolations: or if that cannot be, that we may at least save our own Souls in the Day of the Lord. For seeing we are like to feel the Effects of the New Conjunction of *France* and *Spain*, the

* Dr. More in his *Divine Dialogues*, pag. 161. See also his *Mystery of Iniquity*, Lib. 2. Chap. 15, 16, &c.

† The same *Vergerius* that attended on FRANCIS SPIRA. See his Life.

the Election of a young politic Pope, and the Apostacy of some Protestant Princes to the *Romish* Interest, (which together with the Impieties and Scepticism of a great many within ourselves, are I am sure no good Prognosticks) have we not just reason to prepare for remarkable Revolutions? While therefore I think of these things, I cannot forbear to give a vent to my thoughts on the great and dark head of futurity; in presenting you with some conjectures in relation to our times, founded upon scripture prophecy, as far as I understand it.

Therefore seeing this is the chief design of this discourse, which I have inscribed to you, I hope ye will bear with me in giving you some brief account of the times we are fallen in, and what we may expect if we live much longer. Which I am the rather induced to do, because we are just now entering upon a *New Age*, from which we look back upon seventeen centuries, which have elapsed since our blessed Redeemer came into the world, and may therefore be allowed to conjecture, with some just ground perhaps of probability (for I do industriously avoid the fatal rock of positiveness, which so many Apocalyptical Men have suffered themselves to split upon) what part of the revelation remains yet to be accomplished.

But since I am to confine myself to a little compass here, as remembering I am writing no book properly, but an epistolary discourse, prefatory to those that follow, with which therefore it must keep some proportion: I shall content myself in giving you a few hints, towards the resolution and improvement of that grand APOCALYPTICAL QUESTION; When the reign of Antichristianism or the Papacy began?

There are TWO THINGS therefore, which lie before me to be considered at this time.

I. I must fulfil my promise in giving you a new resolution of the grand *Apocalyptical Question* concerning the rise of the *Great Antichrist*, or *Rome Papal*. For when we have done this, and fixed this æra or epocha, we may by an easy consequence, see the time of the final fall and destruction of this *dreadful Enemy*.

II. I must in the next place, improve the resolution of this question, both *theoretically* as a KEY to unriddle the dark apocalyptical times and periods; and *practically*, in order both to the regulation of your thoughts and the government of your lives, in some very weighty considerations deducible from thence.

The first thing therefore which I have to do, is to attempt the resolution of the principal apocalyptical question concerning the *Rise of Antichristianism*.

Now in order to answer this distinctly (which hath exercised and wearied out all apocalyptical writers hitherto) there are some things I would premise as so many postulata, which generally all are agreed in, and which Mr. Mede, Dr. More, Mr. Durham and Dr. Gressener, have irrefragably proved.

* See Rev. 4. 1, &c. 10. 5, 6, 7. 1. That the Revelation contains * the series of all the remarkable events and changes of the state of the Christian church to the end of the world.

† See Rev. 17. 1, 5, 18. 2. That † *Mystical Babylon* or the great Whore, described there, doth signify Rome in an *Antichristian Church State*. 3. That therefore this cannot be *Rome Pagan* properly, but *Rome Papal*. 4. That the ‡ *Seven Heads of the Beast* or the *Seven Kings*, are the seven *Forms of Government*, which obtained successively among the Romans: And seeing the || *Sixth* of these was that which was only in being in John's time (the former *Five* having fallen before) that therefore consequently, the *Seventh* head, which under another consideration is called the *Eighth*, (the intervenient kingdom of the *Ostro-Goths* being the

‡ See Rev. 17. 10, 11.

|| Ibid.

the

the *Seventh* in Number, though not properly Roman, and therefore, in that sense, none of the *Heads* of the Roman government) is the *last species of Government*, and that which is called most peculiarly and by a speciality the BEAST, or ANTICHRIST.

These postulata being supposed as certain, (which I would reckon no difficult thing to prove, were it needful) I must in the next place premise two preliminary considerations, before I come directly to answer the question itself.

The first is this; That the *three* grand apocalyptic number of 1260 days, 42 months, and time, times and an half, are not only *synchronical*, but must be interpreted *prophetically*, so as years must be understood by days.

That these three numbers are synchronical, will appear plain to any impartial considerer, that will be at pains to compare them, as we have them set down in this book of the Revelations, viz. the 1260 days, chap. 11. 3. and chap. 12. 6. the 42 months, chap. 11, 2. and chap. 13. 5. and the time, times and an half, chap. 12. 14. For it is clear, that the *Gentiles treading down the holy city 42 months*, chap. 11. 2. is the cause of the *witnesses prophesying for 1260 days in sackcloth*, v. 3. and is not the *woman or churches being in the wilderness* for the same term of days, chap. 12. 6. any other than a new representation of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth? Seeing this must be while the Beast is worshipped and served by the whole *Roman world*, during men's lunacy of 42 months continuance, chap. 13. 5. And therefore seeing the woman is said to be in the wilderness state of desolation and persecution, for a time, and times, and half a time, in order thus to be preserved from the beast and serpent, as we see chap. 12. 14. It is likewise plain, that this number of three years and an half, must be the very same with the two former numbers. Only it is to be observed by the way,

that this period of time, when it is mentioned in relation to the church, is spoken of with respect to the sun, either as to his diurnal or annual rotation : Whereas when it is described in relation to the beast's unstable kingdom of night and darkness, it is made mention of with respect to the unconstant luminary, which changes its face continually, while it makes our months. And hence it is that the church is represented, chap. 12. 1. under the emblem of *a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.*

Now as these numbers are synchronical, and the same ; so it is easy to prove that they must be understood prophetically for years. I shall not insist here, upon the conjecture of * a learned man ; that there was no diurnal rotation of the earth before the fall, and consequently no days of 24 hours, but only an annual rotation of this our planetary world ; which he gives us as the original reason of the scripture's putting days for years frequently. For whatever be in this, it is plain that the scripture speaks thus in several places ; by putting a lesser number figuratively for a greater, as well as a definite one for an indefinite. Witness the appointment of the *week of years*, Exod. 33. 10, 11. which is spoken of as if it were a *week of days*, verse 12, the *Seventh Year* of which is therefore called *Sabbatical*, with respect to the *Seventh-Day Sabbath*. In the same way of speaking Ezekiel was commanded to lye 390 days on his left side, and 40 on his right, each *day* for a *year*, as God himself says, chap. 4. 5, 6. So likewise God punished the murmuring Israelites with 40 years abode in the wilderness, with relation to the 40 days that were spent in searching of the land of *Canaan*, Numb. 14. 32. The seven years of Nebuchadnezzar's *Lycanthropy*, is thus called, indefinitely *Days or Times*, Dan. 4. 32, 34. Nay our Saviour

* Whiston's Theory of the Earth, pag. 8, 79, 81. See Hypoth. 3.

Saviour himself speaks in this dialect when he calls the years of his ministry days, saying, *I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected*, Luke 13. 32. But the most remarkable place to our purpose, is the famous prophecy of *Daniel's 70 weeks* or *490 days* chap. 9. 24. reaching down from the edict of Artaxerxes Longimanus, in his 20th year, Neh. 2. 1—10. to our Saviour's suffering at Jerusalem; which was exactly *490 prophetic years*, not *Julian* ones: the not distinguishing of which has hitherto confounded all Interpreters, as I might shew at large, were this a proper place for it. But what the difference between these is we shall quickly see.

In the mean time, I am now to prove that the *1260 days* are to be understood, in a *prophetic* sense, for *years*: for if I can prove this, it will necessarily follow, that the other numbers must be so interpreted also; since they are the same with this. Now that the *1260 days* cannot be taken literally, but *prophetically*, will appear from hence; that it is impossible to conceive, how so many, great and wonderful actions, which are prophesied to fall out in that short time, could happen during the space of *three solar years and an half*; such as, *e. g.* the obtaining power over all kindreds, tongues, and nations; the world's wondering at and submitting unto the Beast's reign; and the setting up an image to the Imperial head, and causing it to be worshipped, instead of the living Emperor's, &c. And besides these things, seeing the *1260 days* are the whole time of the *Papal authority*, which is not to be totally destroyed until the *great and remarkable appearance of Christ*, upon the pouring out of the *7th Vial*; and that therefore Christ will have the honour of destroying him *finally* himself (though this iniquity began to work even in the apostolical times:) therefore we may certainly conclude, that it must take up some centuries of years to carry

on this *abomination that maketh desolate*. For though the Lord will gradually consume or waste this great adversary *by the spirit of his mouth*, yet he will not sooner abolish him than by the *appearing of his own presence*, 2 Theff. 2. 8. as* I chuse both to render and understand the words.

The 2d preliminary consideration is; that in order to understand the *prophetical years* aright, we must reduce them to *Julian years*, or such as are in use with us *now* in Europe.

This is no idle or chimerical inquiry; seeing the ignorance of this has misled all our great Apocalyptical men hitherto in their calculations; and yet unless we are able to adjust the difference between prophetical and *Julian years*, we must still reckon at a venture, without any certainty of the truth and exactness of our arithmetick. Therefore that we may understand this difference, we are to remember, that the antients were far more rude and indistinct in their calculation of time

* The learned Dr. *Whitby*, in his late paraphrase and commentary upon the Epistles, does indeed advance a new notion, on this verse and chapter, viz. that the Jewish Sanhedrim, government and nation, is primarily and chiefly understood here by the apostle, as the man of sin and Antichrist, both upon the account of their opposing themselves to Christ and persecuting of his followers, and upon the account also of their rebelling against the Romans. And he has said so much for the proof of this, that it may be thought to contain a refutation of my interpretation of the place. But even upon the supposition that all that the Dr. says for his opinion should be true; yet it will be found no way to invalidate what I advance here. For all that are acquainted with the Jewish and apostolical writings know, that besides a first sense to be observed in Prophecies, there is a second and remoter one more tacitly insinuated frequently, as the principal design of the Spirit of God. I might shew this in innumerable instances, especially in the antient prophecies that relate to David, or some other person, in the first sense or typical one, but in the Messiah ultimately and completely. But I shall not insist upon any thing of this kind now, seeing so many have done it already: and there is no need to do it here, seeing Dr. *Whitby* himself doth grant all I desire, when he says in his preface to this Epistle, page 383. "But that I may not wholly differ from my brethren in this matter, I grant these words may in a secondary sense (in which expression I only differ from the Dr. seeing I look upon it to be the principal sense, because it is the second) "he attributed to the Papal Antichrist, or Man of Sin, "and may be signally fulfilled in him, in the destruction of him by the Spirit of "Christ's mouth, he being the successor to the Apostate Jewish church, to whom "these characters agree, as well as to her; and therefore in the Annotations I "have still given a place to this interpretation also."

time than we have been since. And indeed such is their confusion this way, that we are obliged to God's providence in giving us the exact compass of a prophetic year, even in this book, by fixing the *synchronism* of the *three numbers* above-mentioned. For by these it is determined, that 30 days make a *month*, and 12 of such *months* a year. So that 1260 days being divided into three years and an half (or time and times and an half in the Apocalypitical dialect) 360 days must make up a year, without the additional five days and odd hours and minutes, that are added, in the calculation of the Julian year. For the *Julian* (and *Gregorian*) months consisting some of 30, and some of 31 days (excepting February only) and the years consequently of 365 days: there must needs be some considerable difference in the revolution of many centuries. Which difference appears still greater, if we consult the late curious Astronomical Calculations of Petavius, Tycho, Kepler, and others. But since their exactness hath only added 5 hours to every year (together with some minutes, firfts, seconds, &c. *communibus annis*, which they themselves are not fully agreed in) I shall not be so nice upon this point, as to follow them exactly in all their criticisms this way. However since five hours additional to a year arise to an intire day, in the revolution of 163 years, it ought not to be altogether neglected. But passing even these, and considering only the five days that are added to the 360, in our ordinary years, we will find that the 1260 days in the Revelation being reduced to years, are 18 years short of Julian years, in the prophetic reckoning, by reason of the additional days turned into years in the ordinary accounts now, above the Apocalypitical reckoning.

To demonstrate which, I present you with the following scheme.

The <i>Prophetical</i> year.		The <i>Julian</i> year.	
One	360	365	
	360	365	
Two	720	730	
Three	1080	1095	
Half	180	183	
Three years } and a half }	1260	1278	

Now if, according to this computation, we subtract 1260 Apocalyptical years from 1278 Julian, or Gregorian ones, (I call them so *ore rotundo*, overlooking the smaller measures of time) there remain 18 years to be cut off.

To apply this therefore to our design. If we may suppose that *Antichrist* began his reign in the year 606, the additional 1260 years of his duration, were they *Julian* or ordinary years, would lead us down to the year 1866, as the last period of the *seven-headed monster*. But seeing they are prophetical years only, we must cast away 18 years in order to bring them to the exact measure of time that the Spirit of God designs in this book. And thus the final period of *Papal usurpations* (supposing that he did indeed rise in the year 666) must conclude with the year 1848.

And now that I have hinted at the time of *Antichrist's rise*, as the conclusion of the preliminary considerations, I must proceed to prove this to be in one sense the true æra of the *Papal beast's reign*. And here it is that I find myself extremely straitened, in discoursing of so great a subject in so narrow a compass.

All

All therefore that I can say here will amount to a few short hints only, though perhaps no inconsiderable ones.

Seeing therefore, as I said before in the 4th Postulatum, it is plain from Rev. 17. 10. That the *Imperial government* was the regent head of the Roman Beast at the time of the vision, we have only the two following heads to consider, as to their rise and duration. Let these things therefore be minded here.

1. That the *Seventh head*, or king of Rome, (as I hinted before) whose character is, that he was immediately to succeed to the Imperial government, and to continue but a *short space*, Rev. 17. 10. That, I say, this government could be no other than that of the kingdom of the *Ostro-Goths* in Italy.

For it is plain, that the Imperial dignity was extinguished in Italy and in the Western parts of the Empire, by *Odoacer*, the king of the *Heruli*, who forced *Augustulus*, the last sprig of an Emperor, to abdicate his throne and power, in the year 475, or 476, as others say. And though this *Odoacer* was soon destroyed by *Theodorick*, the king of the *Ostro-Goths*, yet the same form of regal government was continued by *Theodorick* and his successors. And though this kingdom continued for near 80 years, reckoning from *Odoacer* to *Teias*, yet the angel might justly call this a *short time*; for so it was, if compared either with the preceding Imperial or succeeding Papal Government. Which suggests a very strong argument against some, who would make this seventh king to denote the Oriental Empire, which as it began long before this time, so lasted many centuries afterwards, and was not totally extinct till *Mahomet the Great's* time, in the year 1453. And surely this kingdom was sufficient to constitute a new head of the Roman people, seeing Rome and Italy were subjected intirely to those *Gothish* kings, and that they not only acted with the same authority that the Emperors had used before (excepting that they, abstained

abstained from that title, by a special providence, that they might not be confounded with that government) but were owned by the senate and people of Rome as their superiors, yea by the Emperors of the East also; as might easily be proved from *Historians, particularly †*Cassiodorus*, who was chief Minister of State to two of those kings.

Whence it doth plainly appear, that this kingdom of *Ostro-Goths*, was the *seventh head*, that was to continue a short time. And that therefore it follows, 1, That the change wrought by *Constantine* the Great, both as to the seat and religion of the empire, could not be looked upon as a *new head*; seeing the old government in all other respects was continued. And 2. Neither can any person justly suppose that the form of the government was altered, when the empire was divided into the East and West; seeing in all other respects also the Imperial authority and rule was preserved. Therefore, 3, It follows also that the *Papal Government* was not regnant until the destruction of this *Gothish kingdom* in Italy: for there could not be two supreme heads of the church of Rome at the same time.

Therefore, 2, we may conclude that the *last head* of the Beast, which is the *Papal*, did arise either immediately upon the extirpation of the *Gothish kingdom*, or some time after. But it could not rise to its power immediatly after, seeing *Justinian* did by the conquest of Italy revive the Imperial government again there, which by that means was *healed* after the *deadly wound* which the *Heruli* and the *Goths* had given it. Though I confess *Justinian's* conquests of Italy laid a foundation for the *Pope's* rise, and paved the way for his advancement: both by the *penal* and

* See Baron. ad Ann. 472, 475, &c. Petav. Ration. Temp. Lib. 7. Cap. 5. Bellarm. de Translat. Imp. Rom. Lib. 1. Cap. 9, &c.

† In Lib. Variarum, Lib. 1. Ep. 23, 31, &c. Lib. 4. Ep. 45, &c. Lib. 3. Ep. 16, 18, Lib. 8. Ep. 2, 3, 4, &c.

sanguinary laws which he made against all those that dissented from the Romish church, and by the confusions that followed upon *Narses* his bringing in the *Lombards*. For during the struggles of them and the *Exarchat*, the Pope played his game so, that the Emperor *Phocas* found it his interest to engage him to his party, by giving him the title of *Supreme* and *Universal Bishop*.

Therefore we may justly reckon that the *Papal Head* took its first rise from that remarkable year 606, when *Phocas* did in a manner devolve the Government of the West upon him, by giving him the title of *Universal Bishop*. From which period, if we date the 1260 years, they lead us down (as I said already) to the year 1866, which is 1848, according to prophetic calculation. Or, if a bare title of this sort be not thought sufficient to constitute the Pope *head of the Beast*, we may reckon this two years later, viz. from the year 608, when *Boniface* the 4th did first publicly authorize idolatry, by dedicating the Pantheon to the *worship of the Virgin Mary* and all the saints.

Now it is very remarkable, that in the year 666 *Pope Vitalian* did first ordain, that all publick worship should be in *LATIN*. And therefore however the notion of * *Irenæus* has been of late ridiculed, who observed that the characteristical *number of the Beast*, viz. 666, answering to the number of a *man's name*, was to be found in the word *Λατεινος*, from whence he concluded that he was to be a Roman; I cannot but think there is something remarkable in this (even though the numerical letters of other words should jump with this number also) not so much because of the antiquity of the notion, as upon the account of the reason he suggests to us for this, when he says, that though he grants that other names (as that of *εὐαγγελος*) may be so rendered, yet he fixes upon this, because the † *Latin*

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* *Iren. adv. Hæret. Lib. 5. Cap. 30.*

† It ought to be observed here, that not only the Greek word, but even the Hebrew contains the number 666, in the numerical letters thereof, whether we make

monarchy is the last of all, and therefore the beast must relate to this or none. Wherein I suppose he alludes to Daniel's account of the *four monarchies*, chap. 2. and 7. And indeed the *little horn* that arose out of the head of the 4th *Beast*, chap. 7. 8. seems not unfitly to represent not only Antiochus Epiphanes, but the *Papal Antichrist*, whose type he may therefore be supposed to be. For as he supplanted three *kings*, in allusion to which that little horn is said to have plucked up three *horns* before it by the roots: so did the Papal Government rise also upon the ruins of the *Exarchat*, the *Lombards*, and the authority of the *Emperors* in Italy.

I believe this account of Antichrist's rise will not be very acceptable to some, whose zeal for the Pope's downfall has made them entertain hope of living to see that remarkable time; which has made them invent plausible schemes to prove that this great enemy was seated in his regal dignity long before the year 606. But if a man will trace truth impartially, he will have reason to think, that the *rise* of this adversary could not be before that time. Nay I must tell you that I

do

make use of רומית Romana, scil. Sedes, or רמענוש Romanus vel Latinus. As will appear from the following scheme.

ר	200	ר	200	λ	50
ו	6	מ	40	α	1
מ	40	ע	70	τ	300
י	10	נ	50	ε	5
י	10	ו	6	ι	10
ת	400	ש	300	υ	50
	666		666	ο	70
				ς	200
					666

And whereas Bellarmin objects, that Latinus should be rendered by a single Iota and not by *ei*, he is exceedingly mistaken: For not only Irenæus renders the word thus, but all the Greeks do the same, as is plain in innumerable instances, such as in the names *Αντωνιος*, *Σαβινος*, which the Romans pronounce Antoninus, Sabinus. Nay the ancient Romans spake the same way as the Greeks, as is plain in Plautus and the fragments of Ennius, with whom nothing is more common than *quis* for *quis*, *preimus* for *primus*, *capiteivi* for *captivi*, *latinei* for *latini*, &c.

do not reckon the *full rise* of the Pope to the headship of the empire till a later date still. For though the Pope got the title of *Universal Bishop* at that time, yet he was afterwards for a long time subject, in temporal concerns, to the emperors. And therefore I cannot reckon him to have been, in a proper and full sense, *head of Rome*, until he was so in a *secular* as well as *ecclesiastical* sense. And this was not until the days of *Pipin*, by whose consent he was made a *secular prince*, and a great part of Italy given to him as *Peter's patrimony*. So that as *Boniface the third* (and his successors) by assuming the title of *Universal Bishop*, was the forerunner of *Antichrist*, as *Gregory the Great* prophesied he would be, who should be known in the world by that proud title: so likewise we may conclude that *Antichrist* was indeed come, when *Paul the first* became a *temporal prince* also. *Phocas* therefore did only proclaim the Pope to be the *last head of Rome*, in the apocalyptical sense: but it was *Pipin* who gave him the solemn investiture, and *seated* him on his *throne*, which *Charlemain* did afterwards confirm to him.

Now as near as I can trace the time of this donation of *Pipin*, it was in or about the year 758, about the time that *Pope Paul* the First began to build the church of St. Peter and St. Paul. Now if we make this the *Æra of the Papal Kingdom*, the 1260 years will not run out before the year 2018, according to the computation of *Julian* years: but reducing these to prophetic ones, the expiration of the papal kingdom ends exactly in the year 2000, according to our vulgar reckoning. And if what I suggested above be true, that *Antichrist* shall not be finally destroyed until the *coming of Christ*, then may this calculation be looked upon to be very considerable. For it has been a very *antient Opinion*, that the world would last only *six thousand years*; that, according to the old traditional Prophecy of

the *house of Elias*, the world should stand as many *Millenaries* as it was made in *days*; and that therefore as there were *two thousand years* from the *creation* to *Abraham*, without a written *directory of Religion*, and *two thousand* from thence to *Christ*, under the *old æconomy of the law*, so there would be *two thousand years more* under the *Messiah*. So that after the militant state of the Christian church is run out, in the year 2000, it is to enter upon that glorious *sabbatical millenary* when the *saints shall reign on the earth*, in a *peaceable manner*, for a *thousand years more*. After the expiration of which, Satan shall be let loose to play a new game, and men shall begin to apostatize almost universally from the Truth, gathering themselves together, under the character of *Gog and Magog*, from the four corners or parts of the world, until they have reduced the Church to a small compass. But when they have brought the saints to the last extremity, Christ himself will appear in his glory, and destroy his enemies with fire from Heaven, *Rev. 20. 9.* Which denotes the great conflagration, *2 Pet. 3. 10, &c.* Which is followed with the Resurrection, and Christ's calling men before him into judgment. And perhaps *the time of this judgment* will take up the greatest part or the whole of another *millenary* of years: that as there were four thousand years from the creation to his first coming, there may be four from thence, to his triumphant entry into Heaven with all his saints. For though the scripture call this time a day, yet we know what *Peter* says, that *a thousand years and a day are the same thing in Divine reckoning*. But that all men that ever lived should be publickly judged in a day, or year, or century, so as to have all their life and actions tried and searched into, is to me I confess inconceivable, not indeed in relation to God, but in relation to men and angels who must be convinced of the equity of the procedure and sentence of the judge.

2 Pet. 3.
8.

But

But to return, I cannot forbear to take notice of one thing here; that the year 758 was the year 666 from the *persecution of Domitian*, when *John* was in *Patmos* and wrote this *Book*, (as *Tertullian*, *Irenæus*, *Origen*, *Eusebius*, *Jerom*, and all the *antients* excepting *Epiphanius* tell us) which though some say was *A. C.* 95, was most probably in or about the year 92, the *Persecution of Domitian* having begun two years before. So that here we have another *characteristical mark of the number of the Beast*.

And now I hope I have said enough of the *future part of time*, as to the *general idea* which I think the *Revelation* gives of it. But I must proceed one step further with you, and consider under what *revolution of time* we are at present; that we may thence see what we are to expect, and how we are to act.

So that here I find myself insensibly taken off from any further direct prosecution of the question proposed by way of answer thereunto. And

Therefore II. I proceed to *improve* what I have said as to this question, both *theoretically* and *practically*.

And 1st. I shall advance something here, as a *theoretical improvement* of what I have said upon the *former head*. For by this key, we may attain, in a great measure, to unlock the dark *apocalypitical periods and times*: those I mean that relate to the continuance of the *Papal power*, both as to his gradual *growth* and *increase* first, and his *decay* afterwards, until his last and final *destruction*. And in relation to these the far greatest part of the *Apocalypse* must be understood.

Now in order to this performance, I must premise this one thing; *viz.* That the *seven seals*, *trumpets*, and *vials* (in which is contained the order and series of the whole *Apocalypitical prophecy*, and to the explication and illustration of which all the other particular visions are subservient) that I say these
are

are joined together by the *link* of the *seventh seal*, and *seventh trumpet*; so as the *seventh seal* doth as it were produce or include the *seven trumpets*, and the *seventh trumpet* the *seven vials* in the same manner.

This I should reckon no difficult thing to demonstrate, but that it would be too long to insist upon in this place. And seeing Mr. Durham has done it in a great measure already, I pass it now the more easily. Only let me desire you to consider, that it was not until *after the opening of the seventh seal* that John saw the angels with the *seven trumpets*, chap. 8. 1, 2. And that it was *after the sounding of the seventh trumpet* also, that he tells us, *he saw ἄλλο σημεῖον μέγα καὶ θαυμαστόν*, another sign great and wonderful, chap. 15. 1. which was the vision of the *vials*. So that I wonder that Mr. Mede, Dr. More, and almost all others, have suffered themselves to be confounded in their interpretations, by reason of their not observing this, and consequently by jumbling some of the *trumpets* with the *seals*, and most of the *vials* with the *trumpets*.

Now this being supposed, we will find the series of time run in the following order, according to this *threefold septenary of periods*, which do insensibly run out one into the other.

The *first septenary of seals* relates to the Christian Church during the state of the *Roman empire*. And these do accordingly run in this order.

The *1 seal* exhibits the state of the Church under the conduct of a glorious rider on a white horse, having a bow in his hand, and a crown given unto him, who went out conquering and to conquer, chap. 6. 2. Under which emblem Christ himself is represented, going forth upon his conquests over Jews and Gentiles. And as this relates to Christ's first victory over his enemies, after his commission to his disciples to preach the gospel to all nations, Matt. 28. 18, 19, 20. and the pouring down of his spirit for this end, on the day of Pentecost,

Acts 2 ; so the full completion of it is not until the end of time. For after all other horsemen and enemies of the church have done their utmost against Christ and his people, we find this horseman leading them all in triumph as his captives, and proceeding in his conquests to make a full and final end of them. For which see chap. 19. ver. 11, 12, &c. So that this *seal* begins with *An. 33* or *34*, and does not end until the end of time, as to its full completion. But if we reckon it only in relation to the beginning of the next seal (Christ's conquests being darkened as to the outward view of men, by what follows) we shall see that immediately.

The 2 *seal*, chap. 6. 3, 4. under the emblem of a rider upon a red horse (who had a great sword given him in order to take peace from the earth, and to engage men in wars) represents the state of the empire from the time that *Nero* made war on the *Jews*, *An. 66*, and so contains the civil wars of *Galba*, *Otho*, and *Vitellius*, when men did so remarkably kill one another, and the wars of *Vespasian* and *Titus* against the *Jews*, compleated afterwards by the terrible destruction of that nation under *Hadrian* ; together with his other wars, and the preceding persecutions of *Domitian* and *Trajan*, and the conquests of this last prince. So that as this begins with *An. 66*, it ends with *Hadrian's Wars*, *An. 134*, or with his life, *An. 138*.

The 3 *Seal*, chap. 6. 5, 6. begins therefore with *An. 138* ; where, under the hieroglyphick of a rider on a black horse, with a pair of ballances in his hand, to weigh and measure all things exactly, is set forth the excellent reigns of the admirable *Antonines*; *Pius* and *Philosophus*. And therefore this seal runs out in the year 180.

The 4 *Seal*, chap. 6. 7, 8. represents the *Roman horse* turned pale, and the rider changed from a grave and awful judge to a murderer, so as to be called death, by reason of his throwing so many into *bades*, or the
future

future state, by immature deaths. Where we have a very remarkable account of the state of the Roman empire after the decease of the brave *Antoninus Philosophus*, under the barbarities of *Commodus*, the short-lived reigns of *Pertinax* and *Didius Julianus*, but especially under the severe and bloody *Septimius Severus*, in his wars against *Persecennius Nigerius*, *Albinus* and others, and under his son *Caracalla*; and afterwards under *Macrinus*, *Heliogabulus*, (the reign of the excellent *Alexander Severus* being but a short breathing to the empire and the Christians) *Maximinus* and his son *Pupienus*, *Balbinus* and *Gordianus*, and *Philippus* and his son: with whose death I think this seal runs out in the year 250. And with the death of these *Philippi*, who favoured Christianity, the four *evangelical living creatures* (which our translation renders *Beasts* most unaccountably) cease to speak openly.

The 5 Seal therefore discovers the state of the Christian Church to be exceedingly languishing and melancholy, as if the saints were all slain, praying and crying for vengeance against their persecutors, while they are represented as lying under the altar, chap. 6. 9, 10, 11. So that this period begins with *Decius* the first universal persecutor of Christians (for all the former persecutions under *Nero*, *Domitian*, *Trajan*, and the *Antonines*, were but provincial ones, and that of *Maximinus* against the ministers only) who began his reign and persecution together in the year 250, and was seconded in it by *Valerian* (for the short reigns of *Trebonianus Gallus* and *Æmilianus* hardly deserve to be taken notice of in this case.) Now the souls of the martyrs are desired to rest patiently, until the confused reign of *Galienus* should run out, and the 30 tyrants that rose in his time should be out off, altogether with the short-lived *Claudius Gothicus*; seeing after that little interval, their brethren were also to suffer still further under Rome Pagan, viz. under *Aurelian*, and afterwards (when

(when the short reigns of *Tacitus*, *Probus*, *Carus*, and *Carinus* should be over) under the cruel persecution raised against them by *Dioclesian* and *Maximianus* elder and younger, together with *Severus* and *Maximinus*. So that this seal ends with the conclusion of this last persecution begun by *Dioclesian*, and so expires, *A. C.* 306.

The 6 Seal, chap. 6. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, gives us an account of God's gracious answer at length to the prayer of the slain witnesses, in the destruction of *Rome Pagan*, after their cup was made full by the last cruel persecution. And this is described as if *Heaven and Earth were come to an end*. For so the *Prophets* use to represent the ruins of *Kingdoms and Monarchies*, as we see, among other places, in *Jer.* 4. 24. *Isa.* 13. 10. and 24. 21, 23. and *Joel* 2. 10. So that this Seal contains the great and terrible Wars of *Constantine the Great* against all those last Tyrants, from the year 306, to the death of the last Pagan Emperor *Licinius*, *Ann.* 324.

The 7 Seal therefore, chap. 8. 1. represents the short breathing of the Church and Peace of the Christians under *Constantine*, from the year 313, when he first published an *Edict* in their favour, and particularly from the death of *Licinius*, *An.* 324, to his own decease in the year 337, immediately upon which the scene alters. And then begins

The Second Septenary of *Trumpets*, gives us an account of the state of the Church in relation to the gradual growth and increase of her Antichristian enemies, though in a way also of judgment upon them. Which I represent to you in the following series and order.

The 1 Trumpet, chap. 8. 7. began a little after *Constantine's* death, in the wars between his eldest and youngest son, or at the death of the first in battle, and of the last by the usurpation of *Magnentius*, which was a kind of mixt storm of hail, fire, and blood. The

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continuance

continuance of it was in the persecutions against the Orthodox by *Constantius* and *Valens*, with the intervention of that against all Christians by *Julian the Apostate*. And the *conclusion* of it seems to be the usurpation of *Maximus* upon the death of *Gratianus*, and afterwards the death of *Valentinian the Second*, and finally the wars and death of *Theodosius*. So that it began with the year 339, and ended *An.* 395.

The 2 *Trumpet*, chap. 8. 8, 9. represents a great Kingdom, under the Emblem of a Mountain (see *Jer.* 51. 25.) burning with Fire, (i. e. in a cruel and fierce manner) and thrown into the midst of the Body politic or Empire of Rome, represented by the Sea; (see chap. 18. 15.) by which the third part of it became Blood. By which we are unquestionably to understand the irruption of the barbarous nations of the *Vandals* and *Goths* into the Roman dominions. This began about the death of *Theodosius*, and made a formidable progress *An.* 405, in the days of *Arcadius* and *Honorius*, by *Radagisus*, and afterwards *Alaricus*, who took *Rome*, *Ann.* 410. And it was continued during the inroads of *Athaulphus* the Goth, (who pillaged the great City, *Ann.* 414) and of *Ginsericus* the Vandal, and of *Attila* the Hun into *Italy*, and other Roman Provinces, which they and others about that time wasted miserably to the year 455, and afterwards to the year 476.

The 3 *Trumpet*, Chap. 8. 10, 11. doth plainly represent the destruction of the Western Empire, by a star falling from the Heaven of it's glory as a burning lamp. For, after it had struggled with it's fatal destiny, under the obscure *Cæsars*, *Avitus*, *Majoranus*, *Severus*, &c. it did at length expire with *Augustulus*, *Ann.* 475, or 476. This Star was called *Wormwood*, because of the bitter Troubles this brought upon the Empire. For the *Ostro-Goths* planted themselves in *Italy*, and reigned as arbitrarily as the Emperors had ever done. So that this period began with the kingdom

dom of the *Ostro-Goths*, An. 476, and ended with it An. 553.

The 4 *Trumpet*, chap. 8. 12. brings yet further desolations on *Rome*, by darkening it's splendor and glory, represented by the eclipsing of the Sun for a third part of it, and the Moon and Stars also in a like manner. By which we are to understand, no doubt, the decay of the *Imperial Power and Authority in the West*, by the *Lombards* and the *Exarchat* afterwards. So that this trumpet lasted from the year 568 to the year 758, when *Pipin* made the *Pope* in a manner King of *Rome* (who in requital of his kindness, gave his son *Charlemain* the empty Title of Emperor of *Rome*, making thus the succeeding Western Empire an Image of the antient one, *Rev.* 13. 14, 15.) by which both the power of the *Lombards*, of the *Exarchat*, and the *Emperors* did as it were terminate in him. And as the *Exarchat* ended An. 752, so the *Lombards* were totally expelled *Italy* a little after, viz. in the year 773.

Now follows a *threefold woe*, which makes up the subject of the three following trumpets, which are therefore called the *woe-trumpets*, because of the remarkableness of these judgments above the former. Therefore,

The 5 *Trumpet*, chap. 9. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. brings forth the first woe. The description of which is long, and the figures many; so that I cannot be supposed to say much on so large a head here. Let a short account satisfy you. In the first place therefore, we are to understand that no other than the *Bishop of Rome* can be meant by the *Star that fell from heaven*. For this is the symbol of the *Gospel-Ministry*, chap. 1. 20. and agrees not therefore with *Mahomet*. Neither can the place this *Star* fell from, viz. *Heaven*, which denotes the glorious and holy state of the Church, agree to any other, than one that apostatizeth from the service of Christ to the service of the World and Satan. So that as antient

15. 14. 15. *Babylon* is said to fall from the *Heaven* of temporal glory, as *Lucifer* or the *Morning Star* of the *Nations*: so is the *Bishop* of *Rome* said to fall from the *spiritual Heaven* of his *primitive* glory and *purity*; being degenerated from the first *Angel of Light* in the *Church*, to be the *grand Angel of Darknefs*; and becoming thus the *Prince of incarnate Devils*, the *Key of the bottomless Pit* (which he and his *Followers* boast of as the *Keys of St. Peter*) being put into his hand by the *old Serpent*, for carrying on the black designs of *Hell*. 2. The dark pitchy *Smoak* that came out of the *Pit*, upon his opening it, was certainly designed to signify the *Ignorance* that did then prevail in the world, and the *gross and horrid Errors* that were spread abroad and vended for *Divine Truths* by the *sottish Monks*, that then swarmed abroad under various names and leaders, and particularly the *Idolatry* that then began to prevail universally in the world. For about that time, though several of the *Greek Emperors* did stiffly oppose *Image-Worship*, yet the *Popes* did at length prevail, though multitudes on both sides lost their lives in this quarrel. 3. The *Locusts* that came out of this *Smoak* were the *Saracens*, that followed *Mabomet*, who compiled the model of his *Religion*, by the help of *Jews* and *Christian Hereticks*, especially of *Sergius a Nestorian Monk*, whom * the *Arabian* and *Turkish* writers call *Babira*. These *Arabian Locusts* (whose *Hegyra* or *Æra* is dated from *Mabomet's flight from Mecca*, *Ann. Dom. 622*, a little after the *Pope* got the title of *Universal Bishop*, *An. D. 606*) did in a little time so increase, that they conquered or overrun a great many countries in a very little time. For they overflowed *Persia*, *Syria*, *Egypt*, *Palestine* and other places about the year 729. They extended their arms into *India*, *An. 643*, and into *Spain*, *An. 711*, and ravaged several parts of *France* from *An. D. 721*

* See Dr. *Prideaux* his *Life of Malomet*, page 45, 46, 47, 48.

to the year 726, till they were routed at length with a great slaughter by *Charles Martel*, about the year 728. However they continued after that, to be a scourge to the Christians, especially under the reign of the great *Almanzor*, until about the year 772, when * the *Turks* began to grow famous. So that the *five months* or 150 years, wherein they tormented the Christians (though they had no power to destroy their empire) was from 622 to 772. But we must not imagine that these Five Months of Years are the period of this Trumpet. For this must be reckoned from 758 to *Ann. Dom.* 1067, or thereabouts, when *Tangrolipix the Turk* put an end to the *Saracen Empire* by conquering the *Caliph of Persia*. Now therefore in the 4 place (to pass by the other things observable in this *Saracen Woe-Trumpet*) let it be considered that as the *Apostate Bishop of Rome* is called the *Angel or Messenger of the bottomless Pit*: so *Mabomet the King and Prophet of these Saracen Locusts* is called *Abaddon or Apollyon*, *V. 11. i. e. a Destroyer*, as carrying on his religion by sword and violence: from whence his *locust followers* are said, *V. 10. to have stings like scorpions*, by which they poisoned the souls of men, if they did at all spare their bodies; for they were in other respects, *swift and strong as horses*, and had *faces like men* in their reasoning as well as fighting for their superstition, adorned *with hair like women*; appearing soft, and insinuating at first view, though armed *with lions teeth*, as being fierce and cruel. By reason of which qualifications they got many victories, and are therefore represented as *crowned with crowns of Gold*, *V. 7, 8, 9.* But upon the whole matter this *Trumpet*, as it supposes the rise of the *Saracen empire*, from the *Æra of the Hegyra* 622; and the begun rise of the *Pope* from the year 606 or 608. So after 5 months or 150 years, *i. e. to the*
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* See the Authors of the *Turkish History*, put out by *Conradus Clauserus*.

year 772, the *Saracen* preparations continued, and the Papal from 606 or 608 to 756 or 758. So that the duration of this begins with *Ann. Dom.* 758, and expires, in relation to that part of it that concerns the *Saracens*, about the year 1060. But in as far as it relates to the *Popish* Antichristian party, it is continued down through the next Trumpet and the last both. But seeing the *Saracens* are brought in here as a scourge to the worshippers of the Beast, the *Turks* succeeding them in this work, therefore the Trumpet is denominated from this visible scene of affairs, and we must accordingly suppose that it ends with them.

The 6 Trumpet therefore, which is called the *Second Woe*, brings in the *Turks* upon the stage of the *Roman* empire: who are represented as *Four Angels* or *Messengers of Judgment*, chap. 13. 13, 14, 15, &c. which were bound on the other side of the river *Euphrates* for a time; but are now let loose to pass that river and make their inroads into the *Roman* empire, and to erect themselves into a monarchy upon the ruins of it. Now they are called *Four Angels*, because they were then divided into *Four Sultanies* or *Principalities*, as their Embassadors told the Emperor *Justin*, in the year 570, as is related by one of the *Byzantine* historians, and taken notice of by all writers * on this head. For at their remarkable passing the river *Euphrates*, they were under the command of *Solyman Shabum* and his three sons; and when he was drowned in the passage, they brought themselves under four other captains, viz. *Otrogules* and his three sons; of whom one was the famous *Ottoman*, who a little after laid the foundations of that great empire, over which his family keeps the scepter to this day. They are described as *horsemen*, for so they generally were, fighting on horseback for the most

* See *Pecock's Supplem. ad Abul-phar*, page 106, 108, and *Leunclav. Hist.* page 86.

most part, of which the *horse's tail* is still a monument, being used as their chief ensign of honour and command. Their number was prodigious, and might be at that time perhaps exactly *two hundred thousand thousand*, as it seems to be here asserted: for they seldom sent out an army of fewer than a thousand thousand fighting men at once. *Their polished breast-plates represented fire*, when shone upon by the Sun: *and their horses are said to be like lions* for fierceness. And seeing fire-arms began then to be used in war (of which they had great store, together with cannon of prodigious bigness, which did facilitate their taking of cities, and particularly *Constantinople*) their shooting these on horseback is represented as if *the fire and smoke and brimstone had come out of their horses mouths*, their pieces being discharged over their heads. With these they killed the bodies of men, and with their *tails, which had heads also*, they killed the souls of those poor creatures that were stung or bit with their poisonous doctrines: insomuch, that *the third part of men*, i. e. the third part of the antient Roman Empire (*viz.* that part which fell to *Constantine*, when *Constantine* divided the whole among his *three sons*) was destroyed and conquered by them. Now if we inquire into the time of this Trumpet, we have an exact calculation given of it. For they are said to be *prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year*: an *hour* being ever used indefinitely in this book for a *season or period of time*, we are accordingly to take it here. But *days, years, and months* being used definitely always, we must likewise interpret them so here also. So that the sense of the place is, that *the Turks were loosed from Euphrates, as being prepared instruments in the hand of God, for the ruin of the Grecian empire, for a certain hour or season; even for a day, and a month, and a year.* For in that period of time they destroyed the Eastern Empire. For a prophetic year being 360, and a month 30; these

these with the addition of one more make up the period of 391 years. Now we took notice before, that in or about the year 1067, *i. e.* 1062 of prophetical reckoning, *Tangrolipix* erected the *Turkish Empire* upon the ruins of that of the *Saracens*. From thence therefore if we compute the 391 years, we are led down to the year 1458, according to our ordinary computation; but according to prophetical reckoning, to the remarkable year 1453, when *Mahomet the Great* took *Constantinople*, and so erected his own empire upon the ruins of the *Grecian*. For as it is very remarkable that *John* does not make the period of 391 years to be the whole duration of the *Turkish* empire, but only it's preparation for after-action from it's *first rise* to it's *highest exaltation*; so we see how exactly this is fulfilled in the event; which therefore I hope is no unedifying speculation.

Now seeing there is a remarkable stop, and void as it were between the end of the 6th Trumpet and the beginning of the 7th, which is filled up with the account of *the slaying of the witnesses*, in chap. 11. I do humbly conceive, that whatever particular slaughters of the saints were before or may be afterwards, the great slaughter must have been during that interval of time. For this could not be during the height of the two former woes upon *Antichrist* and his followers. And much less can it be supposed to be after the sound of the seventh Trumpet, and while God's last plagues upon the Beast are a pouring out. I do therefore reckon, that the witnesses who prophesied in sackcloth from the beginning of Papal superstitions, were the honest *Piemontois*, *Albigenses*, and *Waldenses*; who were slain at length, after they had stood the shock of all former attacks, particularly that of *Simon Monfort* with his 500,000 *Croissades*, whom *Innocent the 3d* diverted from the *Saracen War*, in order to extirpate that good people, about the year 1200. Now the slaying of these witnesses began
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in the year 1416, when *John Huss*, and afterward *Jerom of Prague* were burnt, but came not to its height until the *Bobemian Calixtines* complied with the council of *Basil*, An. 1434, after which the faithful *Taborites* were totally ruined, as well as their brethren in *Piedmont*, *France*, &c. which happened about the year 1492. For they being destroyed, the *Calixtines* were no better than the dead carcases (as they are called, v. 8.) or corps of the former living witnesses, over which the Popish party did triumph: for they looked upon them as standing trophies of the victory, and therefore did not think fit to kill them further, or bury them out of their sight. For it is said, v. 7, 8, that after they had finished their testimony, the Beast did make war upon them, *καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτοὺς καὶ τὰ πλῆματα αὐτῶν*, &c. he killed them, and their corps also (for the additional words in our version, *shall ly*, are not in the original, and do but mar the sense) or their bodies (for some readings have it *σωματα*) in the street of the great city, i. e. in *Bohemia*, one street of the Papal dominions, or the great city *Rome*, in a large sense. For I find that towards the end of the fifteenth century the witnesses were in a manner wholly extinct. For * *Comenius* tells us, that about the year 1467 the *Waldenses* in *Austria* and *Moravia* had complied so far, as to dissemble their religion, and turn to Popery in profession and outward compliance. † The *Taborites* in the mean time, upon their refusing to do so, were so destroyed, that it was much that seventy of them could get together, to consult about continuing their Church, and about finding out some qualified person to be their minister, for they had none left, An. 1467. And so low was the Church of Christ then, that when the hidden remains of the *Taborites* (who were called *Speculani* from their lurking in dens and caves) sent out four men (as the same author relates

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* *Hist. Pers. Eccl. Bohem.* Ch. 20. Sect. 4, 5. page 70, 71.

† *Ibid.* Ch. 20. Sect. 3.

in another * book) to travel *one* through *Greece* and the *East*, *another* to *Russia* and the *North*, a *third* to *Thrace*, *Bulgaria*, and the neighbouring places, and a *fourth* to *Asia*, *Palestine* and *Egypt*: they did all indeed safely return to their brethren, but with this sorrowful news, that they found no Church of Christ, that was pure, or free from the grossest errors superstition and idolatry. This was in the year 1497. And when they sent *two* of their number *two* years afterwards, viz. *Luke Prage* and *Thomas German*, to go into *Italy*, *France*, and other places, to see if there were any of the *Old Waldenses* left alive: they returned with the same melancholy news as the former had done, that they could neither find nor hear of any remaining; only they were informed of the martyrdom of *Savonarolla* (who suffered in the year 1498) and they were told of some few remains of the *Piemontois*, that were scattered and hid among the *Alps*, but nobody knew where. Now a few years after this even the *few remains* of the *Taborites* were found out and persecuted, hardly any escaping: so that *A. C.* 1510, *six* suffered together publickly, and the year following, that famous martyr *Andreas Palicwa*, who I think was the last of that period. From whose death, in the end of the year 1511, or beginning of 1512, to the dawning of the reformation by the first preaching of *Carolaſtadius* and *Zuinglius*, (who appeared at least a year before *Luther*, as † *Holtinger* and others tell us) there was only about *three years and a half*, which answers as near as can be, to the *three days and a half* of the unburied state of the witnesses. So that *the spirit's entering into the witnesses*, V. 11. began with the year 1516, if not the year before, though this appeared most remarkably when *Luther* opposed the Pope publickly, *An.* 1517. They

* *Comenius* in his *Short History of the Bohemian Church*, prefixed to his *Exhortation to the Church of England*, Sect. 66. page 40.
 † *His. Reform.* vol. 1.

They were not only enlivened, but (to explain the words of *John*, v. 11. a little further) *they rose up upon their feet*, An. 1529, when so many princes and free cities in Germany protested against the *Edict of Worms and Spire*, and so got the name of *Protestants*. They heard a voice from Heaven, saying, v. 12. *ascend hither*, i. e. to power and peace; when *Maurice of Saxony* beat the *Emperor Charles*, An. 1552. And accordingly they did after that ascend to the Heaven of honour, rest, and security, as if they had been *wasted up by a cloud*, and that *in the sight even of their enemies*; when the Protestant religion was established and legally settled and allowed of, in the year 1555, which was continued and confirmed by *Maximillian and Rulolph* afterwards. In whose days the Church began to be settled in several other countries, viz. in *England, Scotland, Denmark, Swedeland, Switzerland, and the Low Countries*. Now it is observable that in this period of time, when the witnesses finished their testimony, or were about to do so, the *Turks* took *Constantinople*, An. 1453. which I take to be designed by the *earthquake that destroyed the tenth part of the Roman dominions*, v. 13. for the *Grecian empire* was reduced before that, from being the *third part* of that empire, to be the *tenth part* only. So that *Mahomet's* prevailing over the *Greek Church*, and the *Pope's conquests* over the *Western Christians* was much about a time, and therefore said to be in the same hour or period of time, i. e. before the *sixth trumpet* ended, and before the *seventh* began: for the *sixth trumpet is the hour of the Turkish woe*. And indeed their triumph was much of the same kind also. For as the *Papists* triumphed only over the *dead bodies of the witnesses*, i. e. over the *Calixtines*, (who were no longer living witnesses, the *Taborites* being all gone, and having overcome their enemies by their blood and the word of their testimony) so the *Turkish triumph* was only over seven thousand names of men, i. e. over the remain-

ing Eastern Christians, who were so degenerated in all respects, that they were only names or shadows of true Christians. Only whereas the Grecians did yet own themselves to be the same in profession with their ancestors, and so were the same with them as to name, the Calixtines were even debarred that privilege.

These things being therefore considered (which I could easily enlarge upon, were I not confined at this time) I think it is abundantly plain, that the *great slaughter* of the witnesses must have been precisely at the time I have mentioned. For it could not be till *Antichrist* was at his *highest pitch* of power and grandeur, which was not before this time. And it was not possible that it should be after the *seventh trumpet* sounded, and the *vials* began to be poured out: seeing the *witnesses* were not only *risen* then, but were the *instruments* of this last and greatest woe to the worshippers of the Beast. And therefore we find, *chap. 11. v. 14, 15, &c.* that *as soon as the witnesses arose, the 2d Woe ended, and the 3d commenced* in the begun exaltation of the saints and servants of God. And it is to me altogether inconceivable, that the witnesses should be risen, and the Antichristian interest decline; and yet that the witnesses should be entirely cut off during such a period. So that I am almost bold, on this head (though I am resolved to propose my apocalyptical thoughts only by way of probable conjecture) to affirm that it is impossible, morally speaking, that the witnesses can ever be so entirely slain, as they have been before, whatever particular and provincial persecutions they may be under for a time, and whatever formidable appearances there may be against the Protestant interest every where.

Against this assertion I can foresee no *objection* of moment, excepting one; and this is, *That seeing the witnesses are said to prophesy all the 1260 days of*
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*the Beast's reign in sackcloth, and to be slain only when they have finished their testimony, v. 3, 7. it seems therefore very strange to say that they shall be slain during the time of their 1260 days or years prophecy, and so long before the end of them. To which I answer, that in the 3d verse there are two things spoken of, with respect to the opposers of Antichrist. The first is, that they are called witnesses or martyrs, against the abominations of that enemy. And the second is, that they are said to preach or prophesy against that interest. Now it is only in the second sense that are spoken of in relation to the whole 1260 days. So that, though the *μαρτυρία* or witness-bearing of the saints continue, in a large and general sense, for 1260 years (and that for the most part in sackcloth, because of the constant troubles they meet with from that restless enemy? yet their *μαρτυρία*, or witness-bearing by martyrdom and sufferings, in a strict and proper sense, relates only to the time of their low and obscure state during the rage of the Papists, before the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Now it is not said (though perhaps this was never taken notice of before) that the witnesses were killed after their whole prophecy or preaching was over, or after the 1260 days were run out: but only that after their *μαρτυρία*, or testimony for Christ by suffering was over, that then, I say, they were universally slain and cut off, v. 7. Now, though there have been many persecutions since the reformation, and the founding of the seventh trumpet, yet they were never universal ones. Besides, that the difference is great between the witnesses before and since that time, in this respect: for since Luther's appearing, our religion has been established publickly in several nations, and authorized by law, in opposition to Popery, which it never was before. But to proceed.*

The 7 Trumpet sounds, chap. 11. 14, &c. immediately

diately upon the end of the 6th, i. e. upon the rising of the witnesses. Now as the 13 and 14 chapters are but further representations of the state of affairs under the *six trumpets preceding*, relating to the condition both of the Church and Antichristian party: so the 15 and 16 chapters are *preliminary* to the *period of the seven Vials* being poured out upon the Papacy and it's dominions. Of which visions I have a great many things to say; but I must curb myself now, lest I prove too tedious. I shall therefore only put you in mind of what I hinted before, that the 7th trumpet comprehends the Seven Vials. For these are but the parts of it, which gradually destroy the Papal interest, which had increased under the former trumpets. As therefore this period brings in reformation, and by *various steps* makes the *kingdoms of the world* (which before were under Antichrist) to change so far and so wonderfully as *to become the kingdoms of God and Christ*, chap. 11. 14, &c. So after a general but glorious account of the state of the church from the reformation, chap. 14. and a general account of the Vials to be poured out on the *Popish* party during the same period, chap. 15. we have a distinct account of the pouring out of these *Seven Vials*, chap. 16. in obedience to the great *Voice out of the Temple*, v. 1. which is but a repetition of the sounding of the *Seventh Trumpet*, chap. 11. 14. under a new representation of it.

The *third and last Septenary*, therefore, is that of the *Vials*, or last plagues and judgments upon *Rome* Papal: which, as far as I can, I shall explain, by a distinct account of such of them, as I reckon to be fulfilled, and by some few conjectures upon the remaining ones.

But before I proceed to the particular consideration of these, there are two things, which I would premise. The 1 is, that as the *Trumpets* did raise
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Antichrist up, and the Vials must pull him down: so there is a wonderful relation that the last bear to the former, especially the four first ones. For the first Trumpet and first Vial bring Judgments on the Earth, the second Trumpet and Vial on the Sea, the third Trumpet and Vial on the Rivers, and the fourth Trumpet and Vial on the Sun. The 2 is this: that seeing the Vials do suppose a struggle and war between the Popish and Reformed Parties: every Vial is to be looked upon, as the event and conclusion of some new periodical attack of that first party upon this other: the issue of which proves at length favourable to the latter against the former. Which seeing it is the most noble and remarkable part of the period that the Vial relates to, is therefore that which denominates the period itself; even as the conquest of Pompey by Cæsar, and of Antony by Augustus, suppose their wars before, and give the denomination to their governments. These things being premised, I now proceed.

The 1 Vial, which fell upon the earth, to the tormenting of the subjects of the Beast, chap. 16. 2. doth denote God's judgments upon the foundation of the Papal power; the earth being that on which we walk and build our houses, and out of whose womb we are maintained. So that by this I understand the Popish Clergy and the Papal dominions and revenues, as they are upheld by them. This therefore began with the reformation, and continued until the time that the Popish factors and trumpery were thrown out of as many countries of Europe as embraced the reformation. And we may easily conceive what a mortification this was to that party, when the pretended sanctity of their Priests, Monks, and Nuns, was found to be mere cheat, and their miracles nothing else but Lies or Legerdemain; and when their tales of purgatory were exposed to publick contempt, and their pardons and indulgences would sell no longer:

longer : and consequently when the Pope, and his *red-batted and mitred officers* saw themselves driven out of so great a part of their dominions, their *seminaries* for breeding their *motly soldiers* of all denominations and orders pulled down, and so much of their yearly revenues lost. Whence they are said to fall under a noisome and grievous *ελκος*, ulcer or sore ; being this way pained and vexed inwardly, and rendered contemptible to the whole world, that looked upon them as no better than *vermin*, and the *plagues* of mankind. So that this *Vial* began with the rise of *Zuinglius* and *Luther* and the other reformers, in the year 1516, and 1517, and continued to the year 1566, *i. e.* about forty years : for against that time all the reformed churches were settled, and had published their *creeds* and *confessions* against Rome, in opposition to the determinations of the *Popish Council* of Trent, published *An.* 1563, and the *Creed* of Pope Pius the 4th, which added 12 Antichristian articles to the 12 primitive christian ones, which was put out, *A. C.* 1564.

The 2 *Vial*, ver. 3. must therefore begin where the other ended, as to the period of time that commences from thence. Now I find that in the year 1566, the wars between the *King of Spain* and the *States of the Netherlands* began, when the latter got the nickname of *Geuse*. And though the *Spaniards* were often victorious at first, yet they were at length forced to declare them *free states*. It was then that the sea became blood to the *Romanists*, their votaries being miserably defeated in their expectations. For after their cruelties under the *Duke of Alva* in the *Low Countries*, and their massacres of the Protestants in *France* and other places, the scene was changed very quickly. So that *A. C.* 1588. the *Spaniards* lost their vast *Armado*, and did ever after decline in their power. And the *Duke of Guise*, the inveterate enemy of the Protestants, was killed the
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same year. And *A. C.* 1598, died *Philip the 2d* of *Spain*, being eaten up of lice: the *edict of Nants* being given out the same year in *France* in favour of the Protestants. So that as the *reformed interest* was in peace every where, and conquered in *Holland* and *England*; the *Popish party* on the other hand saw *Spain*, the late terror of the Protestants, brought to a languishing condition, and all their *allies* weary of wars and persecutions. And as in the year 1609, the *truce* was made between the *Spaniards* and the *Dutch*; so the war, though renewed and carried on afterwards, became languid and faint, so as hardly to be felt or minded by either party, especially the *Dutch* who were for the most part victorious and successful. So that, as the period of this Vial began *An.* 1566, so we may reckon it continued about fifty years, *viz.* to the year 1617; seeing we shall find that the third Vial did begin then. For

The 3 Vial, *v.* 4, 5, 6, 7, was poured out upon the *rivers and fountains of water*, or those *territories of the Papacy* which were as *necessary* to it as *rivers and fountains are to a country*, being as it were, the former Vial continued, as to the kind of the plague. For as the former destroyed the *living creatures or living souls* that were in or upon the sea, *viz.* the *Spaniards*, the great *mariners* of the world at that time, as to their marine power; who after the year 1588, lost their former *sovereignty of the seas*, to the *English* and *Dutch*: so this latter plague makes it difficult for the *Popish party* to subsist and keep their ground even in the *inland country* and several dominions of *Germany*, and the neighbouring places. For in the year 1617, *Ferdinand* being forced upon the *Bohemians* by the Emperor *Matthias*, and crowned king; the foundation of new quarrels was laid this way. For a little while after another most bloody religious war ensued, which shook all the empire, and frightened *Europe*. And though the Protestants lost *Bohemia*, the *Palati-*

nate in part, and were driven out of *Moravia, Austria and Silesia* at this time, and were not only persecuted in many places, but like to be extirpated and rooted out universally: yet the tide turned all on a sudden. For after the Emperor had ruled *Germany* with a veteran army, for a considerable time; *Gustavus Adolphus* enters *Germany* in the year 1630, and conquers every where. And though he was killed about two years after, yet his army continued victorious; until at length all things were accommodated at the *Peace of Munster*, A. C. 1648, with which therefore the period of the 3d *Vial* must be supposed to end, which consists of 31 years. Now as this began with persecutions against, and cruelties upon the Protestants; so at length the *Angel of the waters* is heard to give thanks for making the Papists drink of their own blood at last. Which song of praise another *Angel* falls in with, and says *Amen* to. All which seems to denote the joy both of the *Protestant State and Church* upon the success of the *Swedish Arms* against the *Emperor*.

The 4 *Vial* comes now to be considered. And as this is poured out upon the *Sun of the Papal kingdom*, v. 8; so the effect of it is *men's being scorched or burned with fire*, which yet does not make them turn to God, but blaspheme his name the more, as we may see, v. 9. Now as this *Vial* must begin where the other ends, viz. at or a little after the year 1648; so I cannot see but it must denote the wars that followed the *Peace of Munster*, with other incidental occurrences. Now we find that the *French hostilities* and wars in *Flanders* began about this time. And though this fire seemed to be quenched by the *Pyrenean Peace*, about ten years after that of *Munster*; yet this proved rather fuel to the flame, which broke out with more violence than before, by the seizure of *Lorrain*, the new conquests of the *French* in *Burgundy* and *Flanders*, and the wars upon *Germany*, and invasion on the *Low Countries*. To which we may add the *French King's* quarrels

quarrels with several *Popes*, about the restitution of *Castro*, the rights of the Duke of *Modena*, the Affair of *Corfi*, and about the *Regale* and the *Franchises*. Now seeing the *bombarding of towns and cities* was chiefly made use of in these later wars, we may see how properly the *scorching or burning men from above* (as if the *sun* had sent down fire and heat from his own body) is made use of to *characterize the time of this Vial*. But the chief thing to be taken notice of here, is, that the *sun* and other *luminaries of heaven*, are the *emblems of princes and kingdoms*, as we took notice before. Therefore the pouring out of this *Vial* on the *Sun* must denote the humiliation of some eminent Potentates of the *Romish* interest, whose influences and countenance cherish and support the *Papal cause*. And these therefore must be principally understood of the *Houses of Austria and Bourbon*, though not exclusively of other *Popish Princes*. Now it is not unusual with God to make his enemies crush and weaken one another. And thus I suppose this *Vial* is to be understood, when it is said, that upon the pouring of it out on the *sun*, power was given to him, i. e. the *sun* (as most understand the words from the connection) to *scorch men with fire*. And this is plain in what of the *Vial* is fulfilled, and will be perhaps more so afterwards. As therefore *France* was made use of, in the instances given, to *vex and scorch the Austrian family*, in both branches of it; so afterwards was he himself tormented, when he saw himself forced to leave *Holland*, which he was so near surprising, *An. 1672*; and especially when he was forced to resign all his conquests in *Flanders*, by the late Peace of *Reyswick*. It is true, he seems now to have got more glory than ever, by the accession of his grandson to the *Spanish Monarchy*: But then this is by an *eclipse upon the Austrian family*, which is expired in the first branch of it. And who knows but this advancement may lay the foundation of the ruin or

decay of the *French Power*, by exhausting *that Kingdom*, both as to men and money, in defence of a *weak monarchy*? In the mean time, we see this *Vial* has already taken place, in darkening the glory of *King James* (whom the *Papists* expected new conquests from) by the hand of *King William*; by whom also God put a stop to the career of the *French Monarch* in his conquests in *Flanders*, and on the *Rhine*. And we see it further poured out, in the eclipse of the *Austrian family*, by the loss of *Spain* and it's dependent *Principalities*, as also in defeating the wicked designs of the three confederate monarchs, of *Poland*, *Denmark*, and *Russia*.

And now, seeing I have marked out the time we are in at present, it is time also to put a stop to our *Apocalyptical* thoughts; seeing no man can pretend, upon any just grounds, to calculate *future times*. However, seeing I have come so far, I shall adventure to present you further with some *conjectural thoughts* on this head; for I am far from the presumption of some men, to give them any higher character.

Now my conjectures shall relate to *two things*, viz. to the remaining part of this *Vial*, and to the other *Vials* that follow this.

And, 1. as to the remaining part of this *Vial*, I do humbly suppose that it will come to it's highest pitch about *An. 1717*, and that it will run out about the year 1794. The reasons for the first conjecture are two. The first is, because I find that the *Papal kingdom* got a considerable accession to it's power, upon the *Roman Western Empire's* being destroyed *An. 475*, to which the *Heruli* succeeded the year following, and the *Ostro-Goths* afterward. Now if from this remarkable year we begin the calculation of the 1260 years, they lead us down to *A. C. 1735*, which in prophetic account is this very year 1717. The 2. is, because (as I have many years ago observed) this
year

year leads us down to a new *centenary revolution*: for is it not observable that *John Huss* and *Jerom* of *Prague* (to run this up no further) were burned *Ann* 1417? After which the true religion in *Bohemia*, and other places, was more and more obscured and suppressed, until that famous year 1517, when *Luther* arose, and gave the reformation a new resurrection: according to that remarkable prediction of *Jerom* of *Prague*, *Centum annis reolutis Deo respondebitis & mihi*; which the *Bohemians* afterwards stamped upon their coin as their *motto*. From which year the reformed interest did still increase (whatever particular stops and troubles it met with) till the year 1617; about which time the *German* and *Bohemian* wars began to break out. And it is but too obvious, what an ebb hath followed since that time to this, notwithstanding the pouring out of the second, third, and fourth *Vials*. So that there is ground to hope, that about the beginning of another such century, things may again alter for the better: for I cannot but hope that some new mortification of the chief supporters of *Antichrist* will then happen; and perhaps the *French Monarchy* may begin to be considerably humbled about that time: that whereas the present *French King* takes the *sun* for his emblem, and this for his motto, *Nec pluribus impar*, he may at length, or rather his successors, and the Monarchy itself (at least before the year 1794) be forced to acknowledge, that (in respect to neighbouring potentates) he is even *singulis impar*.

But as to the *expiration* of this Vial, I do fear it will not be until the year 1794. The reason of which conjecture is this; that I find the Pope got a new foundation of exaltation, when *Justinian*, upon his conquest of *Italy*, left it in a great measure to the Pope's management, being willing to eclipse his own authority, to advance that of this haughty prelate. Now this being in the year 552; this, by the addition

tion of the 1260 years, reaches down to the year 1811; which, according to prophetic account, is the year 1794. And then I do suppose the *fourth Vial* will end, and the *fifth* commence, by a new mortification of the Papacy, after this Vial has lasted 148 years: which indeed is long; in comparison with the former Vials; but if it be considered in relation to the *fourth*, *fifth*, and *sixth Trumpets*, it is but short, seeing the *fourth* lasted 190 years, the *fifth* 302, and the *sixth* 393.

And now, my friends, I may be well excused; if I venture no further, in giving you any more *conjectural thoughts* upon this *present period* of time. But seeing I pretend to give my *speculations*, of what is *future*, no higher character than *guesses*, I shall still venture to add something to what I have already said. Therefore be pleased, i. To call to mind, what I premised to the consideration of the *seven Vials*, as the 2d preliminary, viz. that seeing the Vials do (all of them) suppose a struggle or war between the Popish and Reformed parties; every Vial is to be looked upon, as the event and conclusion of some new periodical attack of that first party upon this other; the issue of which proves at length favourable to the latter against the former. For if this be duly considered, it will let us see, that great declining of the Protestant interest for some time, and great and formidable advances and new degrees of increase in the Romish party, are very consistent with the state of both these opposite interests under the Vials. For, as Rome Pagan was gradually ruined under the *Seals*, under many of which it seemed to increase to outward observation, and to become more rampant than before, when yet it was indeed declining; so must we suppose it will be with Rome Papal. For monarchies as they rise gradually and insensibly, so do they wear out so likewise. And therefore we must not entertain such *chimerical notions* of the fall of the *Papacy*, as if it were to be accomplished

plished speedily or miraculously, as many have done. For as it rose insensibly and step by step, so must it fall in like manner.

But to illustrate this further, as to what of the *Vials* is yet unfulfilled, by what is past; let us look back on the *two preceding Vials*. The *2d Vial* therefore began with a formidable attack upon the Protestants by the growth of the *Austrian* family, from the year 1566, to the year 1588; during all which time the *Vial* seemed rather to be poured out on the Protestants than Papists. But as there must be a *war*, to denote a *victory*; so it was in this case. So that the *Vial* was seen at last in it's effects upon the *Austrian* party, from *An.* 1588 to 1598, and afterwards to 1617. For it is with the Church as it is with particular christians, who are often sorely buffeted by Satan, and sometimes brought even to extremities by temptations; but do ever carry the victory at last. Who would have believed that the Christian Church was about to triumph over the *Roman Pagan Empire*, when the dreadful *persecution* under *Dioclesian* and his *collegiate emperors* was at it's highest pitch? But the darkest time of the night ushers in the dawning of the Church's day, in the usual way of God's providence over the same. And this is very conspicuously to be observed in the period of the *3d Vial*. Who would have thought that the loss of *Bobemia*, and the Emperor *Ferdinand's* ruling all *Germany* with a formidable army, were like to issue in the victories of the *Swedish arms*, and the future security of the Protestant interest through the empire and elsewhere? So that, we must not wonder, if for 16 years the *House of Bourbon* be raised up to be a further terror and scourge to the world, and to Protestant nations particularly. And, as a confirmation of this conjecture, let it be considered, in the 2 place (besides what I hinted before on this head) that it is something very extraordinary, and peculiar
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in some sense to this Vial, *that the sun, upon which it is poured out, should yet be made the executor of the judgment of it on others, at the same time that he is tormented with it himself.* So that whosoever is denoted by the *sun* here (as I suppose the *House of Bourbon* principally is) is made use of, as the Devil is, both to torment others, and to be tormented himself in so doing. And if the *King of France* therefore be denoted by this principally, I fear he is yet to be made use of, in the hand of God, as *Nebuchadnezzar* was of old against the *Jews*, viz. as a further severe scourge to the Protestant Churches every where. And, besides this characteristical mark, which seems to forebode his further exaltation and our humiliation; there is yet a 3 thing, that I cannot but think upon with dread and trembling of heart, viz. that it is further said, *that while this Sun of the Popish World is running his fatal and dreadful career, and scorching men with fire, they are so far from being bettered by these judgments, that they go on more and more to blaspheme the name of God, who has power over these plagues.* And while this continues to be the state of the Protestant world, and while atheism, deism, socinianism, irreligion, profaneness, scepticism, formality, hatred of godliness, and a bitter persecuting spirit, continue and increase among us; what can we expect but new and desolating judgments? For, while we continue to *walk thus contrary to God*, we cannot but expect that *he should walk contrary to us also.* It is in vain for us to boast of our *privileges*, or plead exemption from judgments on this account. For where there is no national reformation and repentance, national sins are like to pull down miseries upon us, so much the sooner and more certainly, that we have been so singularly and peculiarly privileged. For we may in this case expect that God will say to us, as to the

Amos 3, 2. *Israelites of old, you have I specially known and chosen above all the families or nations of the earth, therefore will*

will I punish you more certainly and more severely than any other kingdom or nation. And therefore if we go on in sin, as we have hitherto done, let us take heed to ourselves, lest vengeance be near. I pray God I may be mistaken in my fears; but I am afraid I have but too just reason to turn prophet here, by applying to ourselves what Peter said to those of his time: the time is come, that judgment must begin at the house of God. Though I do also conclude with him, that if it begin at us, dreadful will be the end of our enemies at last. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly appear? Wherefore if we be called to suffer for our holy religion, let us do so according to the will of God, committing the keeping of our souls to him in well doing, as to a faithful Creator. And I wish my conjecture be not found to be more than a mere guess, that for about 16 years our Romish enemies may prevail more and more. Though how far these may be lengthened out or shortened, we can only conjecturally judge of, from the future carriage of the Reformed Churches, under the circumstances they may be stated afterwards.

¹ Pet. 4.
17, &c.

If any say, that these are melancholy conjectures, I must tell them I cannot help the matter; for I must follow the thread of the text and the aspect of the times. If they ask, but when will the tide turn for the Protestant Church? I answer, when they turn more universally to God, and no sooner. But if they enquire further, whether the Sun of the Popish Kingdom is not to be eclipsed himself at length? I must positively assert he will; else this Vial were not a judgment upon him and the Romish party. But if yet again the question be, when this is to fall out and how? I must tell you, that I have nothing further to add to what I have said, as to the time. But as to the manner, how this is to be done, our text does lay a foundation of some more distinct thoughts. Therefore, in the fourth and last place, we may justly suppose, that

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the *French Monarchy*, after it has *scorched others*, will itself consume by doing so; it's fire, and that which is the fuel that maintains it, wasting insensibly; till it be exhausted at last towards the end of this century, as the *Spanish Monarchy* did before, towards the end of the sixteenth age. And if we do now heartily and unanimously enter upon a war against *France*, with the assistance of allies, and be but vigorous and faithful in the prosecution of it, securing the source of money and treasure in the heart of *America*, and bringing the war into the bowels of a nation, where a young monarch is hardly established: I say, if we do this, without losing our opportunities, our peace and security may yet be lengthened out. Whereas if we suffer ourselves to be lulled asleep at this time, we may have cause to lament our not having improved our season. But seeing I am not called to give my advice one way or other, I shall leave the determination of such weighty matters to the *wisdom of national councils*. However as my duty is to pray for direction unto these, so I earnestly wish, that there may be nothing to stop the regular and secure procedure of public matters in this critical juncture; upon the wise improvement of which our future stability and peace does so much depend. And now after all this, I desire ye may consult a book I formerly published, called *the Rod or the Sword, or the present Dilemma of these Nations*. For ye will there see more fully my thoughts of our times, and how the *moral reasons* given there, taken from the *aspect of our age*, though preached in 1692, and published the year following, do exactly agree with my present Apocryphical thoughts.

One thing only I shall further take notice of here, upon the occasion of the *King of Spain's death*; that God seems to mark out great things sometimes by very minute ones, such as *Names*, E. G. as the *Spanish Monarchy* began with *Charles the 5th*, (as to the

the *Austrian* family) so it has now expired in one of the same name: which I the rather observe, because of many instances of the same kind. Of which number take these following: *Darius the Mede*, as *Daniel* calls him (though *Xenophon* calls him *Cyaxares*) the *Uncle of Cyrus*, was the first *Medo-Persian Monarch*, after the destruction of the *Babylonian*; and *Darius Codomannus* was the last. *Ptolemy Lagi* began the *Egyptian* kingdom after *Alexander's* death, and *Ptolemy Dionysius* was the last of that race. *Augustus* fixed the *Roman Empire*; and it ended in *Augustulus*. The *Eastern Roman Empire* was erected by *Constantine the Great*, and expired with *Constantine Paleologus*. The *Scots* race came into *England* in a *James*, and has gone out again in another of that name. And whether *William, the Third King of England* of that name, as well as the *Third William Prince of Orange*, be likely to be the last both these ways, is left to future time to unriddle. Only I pray that God may long preserve him, and us by him: And may he live to be a further scourge to *France*, and a terror to *Romanists*.

But 2. to proceed with my other conjectures relating to the remaining Vials: I do further suppose that

The 5 *Vial*, ver. 10, 11. which is to be poured out on the seat of the *Beast*, or the dominions that more immediately belong to, and depend upon the *Roman See*; that, I say, this judgment will probably begin about the year 1794, and expire about *A. C.* 1848; so that the duration of it upon this supposition, will be for the space of 54 years. For I do suppose, that seeing the *Pope* received the title of *Supreme Bishop* no sooner than *An.* 606, he cannot be supposed to have any *Vial* poured upon his seat immediately (so as to ruin his authority so signally as this judgment must be supposed to do) until the year 1848, which is the date of the 1260 years in prophetic account, when they are reckoned from *An.* 606. But yet we

are not to imagine that this *Vial* will totally *destroy* the *Papacy* (though it will exceedingly weaken it) for we find this still in being and alive, when the next *Vial* is poured out.

The 6 *Vial*, ver. 12, &c. will be poured out upon the *Mabometan Antichrist*, as the former on the *Papacy*. And seeing the 6 Trumpet brought the *Turks* from beyond *Euphrates*, from crossing which river they date their rise: this 6 *Vial* dries up their waves, and exhausts their power, as the means and way to prepare and dispose the *Eastern Kings and kingdoms* to renounce their *beathenish* and *Mabometan errors*, in order to their receiving and embracing *Christianity*.

For I think this is the native import of the *Text*, and not that the *Jews* are to be understood under this denomination of *the Kings of the East*; which is such an odd straining of it to serve a turn, as I cannot admit of. Now seeing this *Vial* is to destroy the *Turks*, we hear of *three unclean spirits like frogs or toads*, that were sent out by *Satan* and the remains of the *polity and Church of Rome*, called the *Beast* and the *False Prophet*, in order to insinuate upon the *Eastern nations*, upon their deserting *Mabometism*, to fall in with their *idolatrous and spurious Christianity*, rather than with the *true Reformed doctrine*. And these *messengers* shall be so successful as to draw these *Eastern Kings* and their *subjects*, and with them the greatest part of mankind, to take part with them. So that by the assistance of these their *agents and missionaries* they shall engage the whole world, in some manner, to join with them in rooting out the *Saints*. (And here in a *parenthesis* Christ gives a *watchword* to his servants to be upon their guard in this hour of trial, ver. 15.) But when the Pope has got himself at the head of this vast army, and has brought them to the place of battle, called, *Armageddon* (*i. e.* the place where there will be a most diabolical, cunning and

and powerful *conspiracy* against Christ's followers; then immediately doth the *seventh Angel* pour out his Vial, to their ruin and destruction.

The 7 *Vial* therefore being poured out on the air, ver. 17. brings down *thunder, lightning, hail and storms*; which together with a terrible *earthquake* destroys all the *Antichristian nations*, and particularly *Rome, or mystical Babylon*. And as Christ concluded his sufferings on the cross with this voice, *It is finished*; so the Church's sufferings are concluded with a voice out of the *Temple of Heaven* and from the *throne of God and Christ* there, saying, *It is done*. And therefore with this doth the *blessed Millennium of Christ's spiritual reign on earth* begin; of which, and what may be supposed to follow, we took some notice above.

Now seeing these *two Vials* are, as it were, *one continued, the first running into the second, and the second compleating the first*; the one giving us an account of the *Beast's preparations* for warring against the saints, and the other shewing the event of the whole: there is no need to give you any conjectures about the conclusion of the 6 *Vial*, or the beginning of the *last*; only you may observe, that the *first* of these will probably take up most of the time between the year 1848, and the year 2000; because such long *messages and intrigues* (besides the time spent before in destroying the *Turkish Empire*) and *preparations* for so universal a war, must needs take up a great many years: whereas our blessed Lord seems to tell us, that the destruction of all those his enemies will be accomplished speedily, and in a little time, in comparison of the other Vial. Supposing then that the *Turkish Monarchy* should be totally destroyed between 1848, and 1900, we may justly assign 70 or 80 years longer to the end of the 6 *Seal*, and but 20 or 30 at most to the last. Now how great and remarkable this last destruction of the
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Papal Antichrist will be, we may guess by that representation of it, *ch. 14. 19, 20*, where it is set forth under the emblem and character of the great wine-press of the wrath of God (which can refer to nothing properly but the event of the 7 Vial, as I might shew at large had I time.) Now this wine-press is said to be trodden without the city (*viz. of Jerusalem or the Church*, seeing this is called the City, in scripture stile, as Rome is called the Great City) in Armageddon, *Rev. 16. 16.* which may bear allusion to the Valley of Decision, *Joel 3. 2, 12, 14.* However the greatness of this slaughter appears in this, that the blood is represented to flow in such a current as to reach even to the horse bridles, *viz. of the servants of God*, imployed in this execution: for without doubt this relates to what we have, *chap. 19. 14.* which I beseech you to compare with this place. For ye will find that a large account is given of the fall of Babylon, *chap. 18.* and of the triumph of the Church upon her final victory over this enemy, *chap. 19. 1, &c.* And among other things spoken of relating to the battle and victory obtained at Armageddon, ye have this account of the General and his victorious army, *v. 11, &c.* And I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat on him was called Faithful and True,—and he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed him upon white horses.—And he treaded the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of God.—And I saw the Beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to fight with him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the Beast and the False Prophet were taken,—and both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls

fowls were filled with their flesh. And now to return to the representation of this slaughter by the *winepress of blood*, chap. 14. 20. it is further said of it, that it *flowed to the height of the horse-bridles, for the space or extent of 1600 furlongs.* So that *Armageddon* seems to be denoted here, in the extent of it, as the *field of battle*, which is now turned into a *field of blood.* Now what place can we imagine to be so properly meant by this as the *territory of the See of Rome in Italy*, which (as Mr. *Joseph Mede*, who first made this observation, says) from the city of *Rome* to the furthestmost mouth of the river *Po* and the *marshes of Verona*, is extended the space of 200 *Italian miles*, that is exactly 1600 *furlongs*; the *Italian mile* consisting of 8 *furlongs.* Now the Hebrew word *Armageddon* or *Harmageddon* may be justly derived from *חרמדה*, which signifies both a *malediction* or *anathema*, and a *destruction* or *slaughter*, and *גדון*, or more fully *גדון*, which signifies an *army* or *their army.* So that both the *anathema's* darted against the saints by the *Romanists*, and their *armies* made use of against them (all which proceeded from *Rome Papal*) may be here alluded to, in the *expiration* of both their *ecclesiastical* and *temporal interest.* So that this conjecture upon the name does confirm that other of Mr. *Mede*, that the *Stata Della Chiesia*, or the territory and possession of *Italy* belonging to the *See of Rome*, is the place called *Armageddon*, where the final destruction of *Antichristianism* will be.

And now, my friends, I have fulfilled my promise to you, in giving you not only a *resolution* of the grand *Apocalyptical* question, *When the Papacy began, and when we may suppose it will end:* but some considerable *improvement* of it, with respect to the knowledge not only of *times past*, but that particular period we are now under, together with *conjectures* (and some of them I am sure new and uncommon) about
future

future time. By all which I hope I have given the world such a *key* to unlock all the chambers of the book of the Revelation, as I hope I may venture to say (if considered and used impartially, judiciously, and diligently) will be found to give some new light to us, in our mental journey through the mazes and turnings and dark passages thereof. And had I not been so confined, as ye may see I have been, I might have cleared a great many other dark things in this prophecy. But, seeing I could not neglect this opportunity of presenting these thoughts to the world, as a New-Year and New Age's Gift at once, I do therefore hope ye will the more easily excuse what may seem dark or defective in this discourse, as considering how much I am straitened, not only as to the limits of paper that I must keep to, but of time also.

Now, seeing I have already given you a *theoretical improvement* of the question I have presented you with a resolution of, all that remains is to bring you from *speculations and notions to practice*; that your thoughts may be so seasoned with a serious and deep sense of your duty and interest, that ye may get advantage both by the perusal of my *preceding Apocalyptic Meditations*, and the *following discourses*: That after ye have considered the duty of *improving your time* (which, together with some other things I am now to treat of) ye may make application to yourselves of what I have said concerning *God's dwelling with men upon the earth*, so as ye yourselves may become temples of the living God; seeing God hath * promised this privilege to all true Christians, saying, *I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* And when ye have thus applied to yourselves the first of the following discourses, I hope ye will not reckon it lost time to consider what I have said as to the *ministerial work*, especially the *application*, as to *that part* of it at least, which

* 2 Cor.
6. 16.

which does immediately relate to you and all Christians, as well as Ministers; that this way ye may learn to join in with Christ's ordinances for the future, with greater seriousness, and in order to further good than perhaps any of us have yet attained to do. And when ye have improved this way also by the perusal of the *second discourse*, let me desire you to read the last concluding one, with serious meditation, in order to see the connexion and design of the whole. For though it be short, yet it contains much in little, and may be of use to introduce your minds to some further and more distinct apprehension of our *Holy Religion*, as it *centers in Jesus Christ*. And when ye have thus perused and considered both this and the following discourses, I am willing ye think as meanly of both me and them as ye please, upon condition that ye may this way value the *Holy Scriptures* more. For, as my design, in all my performances of this kind, is to dig my materials from the fruitful and rich mines of this divine depositum and sacred treasure; so I have no other end than to lead you in there also, that ye may be more and more enriched with the *saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus*. In order to this, therefore,

Let me in the *2d place* suggest something here, by way of a *practical improvement* of what I have said above, especially as to that part of our discourse which I was last upon, relating to the Apocalyptical times and periods, with the transactions of the same, in as far as they concern us. And what I have to say here I shall propose by way of *observations*, which may be of some use, I hope, both to *regulate our thoughts and actions*, while we live in this world, in *relation* to the concerns of the Church of God.

The (1) *Observation* is, That it may justly be looked upon as an eminent confirmation of the truth of Christianity, that so wonderful an account should be given

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of the transactions of the world, so long before they came to pass.

The verity of our Holy Religion is proved from two things principally, *viz. Miracles and Prophecy*: and both these arguments have been excellently improved by learned men. But yet, as the *first* of these was perhaps the principal and most convincing *topic* to those that lived in our Saviour's days; so I look upon the *second* to be the most considerable to those that live in after ages. Nay we find that Christ himself did not lay the foundation of the belief of his *Mission* on *Miracles alone*, but seemed to build the faith of his Disciples chiefly on the *Old Testament prophecies*; as he did to the *two Disciples going to Emaus*, *Luke 24. 27, &c.* And I suppose, it is too plain to need any proof, that the *Apostles* did ever insist upon the *prophecies of the Old Testament*, more than either upon Christ's miracles or their own, in order thence to demonstrate that Christ was the *Messias*. For the *testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*, *Rev. 19. 10. i. e.* (as I understand the words) *the spirit of prophecy is the great standing evidence and testimony of the Divinity of Christ, and of the verity of his word.* And therefore (as the Angel argues with *John*) he only is to be worshipped who is truly God, and who inspires his servants with the gift of knowing things to come.

It has therefore been the work of learned men in all ages to prove that Christ was the *true Messias*, and consequently that his *institution of Religion was truly Divine*; by shewing how punctually the *Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in him*. But I am much mistaken, if an impartial considerer of the *New Testament prophecies* may not find some things that do almost as plainly characterize several later events, as the antient prophecies did the former. And of this, let what I have said of the *6th and 7th Seal*, and *5th and 6th Trumpet*, and of the *Slaughter of the Witnesses*,

Witnesses, be taken as instances. Or if this will not be allowed, let it be considered, that we see the full completion of the Old Testament prophecies relating to the erection of Christianity, whereas we see not the entire fulfilling of the Apocalyptical ones. Therefore we must make allowance for the different representation of the one and the other of these. For they only that shall live after the great battle of *Armageddon* is over, can see the exact fulfilling of this prophecy in the destruction of Antichrist, with the same advantage they see also the fulfilling of *Daniel's* visions with respect to the coming of the Messiah and his death. We therefore now have no more advantage, as to time, in explaining and understanding this latter event, than the *Jews* had as to the first, who lived in the days of the *Maccabees*, while *Daniel's Weeks of Years* were running out. And I question if they then did understand the periods of time they were under, more clearly, if at all so distinctly, as we do the times that have past over the Christian Church, and that part of time we are now under. Therefore I say we have great reason to thank God, that so much of this book is already made so clear to us, as to prove confirming thus far to our faith. For whatever differences have been among the most eminent interpreters of this book, as to particular calculations and accommodations of things; yet they have all of them agreed in the main foundations of the interpretation thereof, which I have built upon, (excepting *Grotius* and *Hammond*, whose hypothesis has had few followers, and will have fewer) as Doctor *Cressener* has irrefragably proved in his book, intituled, *A Demonstration of the First Principles of the Protestant Applications of the Apocalypse*. So that there are two things almost equally strange to me, that the *Jews* should own the verity of the Old Testament and particularly of *Daniel's* prophecy, and not see that the Messiah is come; and that the Papists should believe

the Divinity of the New Testament, and particularly of the Revelation, and not see that their Church is Antichristian. But while I admire the wilful stupidity of both these parties, I cannot but admire also the wisdom of God in making use of both these in his providence to confirm to us the verity of Christianity, in prophesying both of the one and the other so long before, and in continuing them to this day as standing monuments of the Divinity both of the Old and New Testament. But besides this, there is

A (2d) observation, that may be of great use to us this way also, is, *That this book represents to us, as in a small but exact map, the steadiness and exactness of Providence, and Christ's Government of the World.*

For here we see the various and seemingly confused events of Providence so exactly methodized, as to make up one uniform and noble piece: the seeming discords and jarring sounds of things, being so disposed by infinite wisdom, as to make up one perfect harmony. Here *Piety and Wickedness, Angels and Devils, the Church and Antichrist*, act various and contrary parts: And yet Christ makes use of all for noble purposes, and carries all on for one great end.

And now, as in other respects, so in this, we may take notice of the *perfection* of the *Holy Scripture*; that what is wanting in *history* is made up in *prophecy*, which in some sense is history also. For if history, in the *general notion* of it, be *an account or relation of the actions of men in the world*, prophecy is no less a *species* of this than that to which the name is most commonly appropriated. For as that is a relation of things past, prophecy is an account of things to come. Now as *Daniel* makes up the *hiatus* or defect of the history of the Old Testament, so the *Revelation of John* supplies that of the New, by leading us down from Christ's first to his second coming.

And here let me observe, that these two books give us the exact plan of a Divine History, which
never

never yet was given: the only Essay towards something of this kind, that I know of, having been given by a * near and dear friend of mine. For tho' there have been many Ecclesiastical as well as Civil Histories written, yet none of these run in the strain of Scripture-History, where all matters of fact are related not so much in a reference to men as in relation to God, and his providence in governing the world.

A (3d) observation is this; *That we may now, after what I have said, attain to a distinct view of what part of this prophecy is past, and what remains yet to be fulfilled.*

Of this I shall say nothing directly at this time: seeing the preceding scheme I have given of the Apocalyptical periods may, I humbly hope, afford you a sufficient thread to regulate and fix your thoughts and meditations in relation to this subject; only I shall hint some things to you, that are deducible from what I have already said this way.

Therefore, 1. let me advise you not to suffer yourselves to be deluded with the specious or confident pretences of some men, when they go about to impose not only upon themselves, but upon the world, by their notions relating to the sudden Coming of Christ to judge the world, or to the speedy destruction of the Papacy. I love to expose no man's weaknesses, and I perfectly abhor the way that of late is become modish, to rip up and publish personal failings. And therefore I shall neither trample upon the graves of the dead, nor affront the living: as remembering that we do all know in part and prophecy in part only. But, without detracting from others, I do in faithfulness and love desire ye may not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by a vain imagination
that

* My father in his third part of the fulfilling of Scripture, called, *Scripture Truth confirm'd and cleared, by some eminent appearances of God for his Church, under the New Testament.*

that the end of things is so near, as some both of old and of late have pretended to foresee. For, from the scheme I have given you, ye may easily see, that there are many and great events to fall out before the final fall of Antichristianism, and more before the consummation of all things.

And 2. as I would not have you to suffer your *hope* to carry you too far, so neither your *fear*. For as the warm imagination of some men has represented to them the Fall of Antichrist and the Day of Judgment so near, that these must happen in their times; so the melancholy and fear of others has so far wrought upon them, that they have fancied the great slaughter of the witnesses is yet to come. And of both these sorts of men this observation will be found generally to be true; that those over whose reason fancy and imagination has the ascendant (whether it be an airy or sprightly, or a dull and melancholy one) have still limited great events to their own time; and most commonly to a very few years. But I am much mistaken if I have not proved, that the universal slaughter of the witnesses is already past; though, at the same time, I do readily grant that there is just ground to fear that we are near some very trying judgments, of some years continuance. But I have said enough of this above, and therefore shall add no more here.

But 3. seeing I have touched but slightly upon the *Millennium*, or the thousand years reign of the saints on earth; I shall desire you to think a little further on this, as the greatest event that is to happen before the end of the world.

I dare not indeed expatiate upon this vast subject; only I shall suggest a few things concerning it.

The 1st is, that this is to begin immediately after the total and final destruction of *Rome* Papal, in or about the year 2000; and that therefore Christ himself will have the honour of destroying that formidable

ble enemy, by a new and remarkable appearance of himself, as I said above. But, 2. we must not imagine that this appearance of Christ will be a *personal one*, no more than his appearance in the destruction of the *Jews* by *Vespasian* and *Titus* was such: for *the heavens must retain him, until the great and last day* ^{Acts .27} *of the consummation or restitution of all things.* 3. Yet we must have a care of confounding this *millenary peaceful State of the Church*, with the *Day of Judgment*: seeing nothing is more plainly distinguished than these are in the 20th chapter of the *Revelation*; where it is told us, *That after the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be again let loose, and men shall apostatize almost universally from Christ, and make war against the Saints; and that after the destruction of those enemies, the Day of Judgment shall commence.* And therefore, 4. we are not to imagine that the millenary reign of the Saints shall be free from all mixture of hypocrisy and wicked men, or from sin and trouble: seeing the sudden and general Apostacy that follows that period is a demonstration, that all were not *Israel* that feigned themselves to be of it, and wanted therefore only an opportunity to shake off the Church's yoke. Nay, the expiration of that period shews, that long peace and prosperity must have corrupted the Church itself; else it cannot be conceived to be consistent with the equity and goodness of God to suffer her enemies to go so near to the total extirpation of his own professing people.

These things I have hinted thus, because I have no time or room to insist upon them as the subject does require. But I do the more readily pass them now, because a * late learned author has materially considered them, at least the three last of them: wherein he has very much confirmed my apocalyptic

* Dr. *Whitby's* Treatise of the *Millennium*, added to his Paraphrase and Comment on the *Epistles*.

tical thoughts, which several years ago I had entertained upon this head.

And the same * author has prevented my inquiry concerning the call of the *Jews*, and their National Conversion to Christianity: for, as I took notice before, I could never fall in with the strained interpretation of *Rev. 16. v. 12*, as if by *the Kings of the East* the *Jews* were to be understood, and that consequently their full Conversion was to be under the 6 Vial. Therefore after various thoughts upon this head, being satisfied that the *Jews* were to be converted, and that this great event could not be wholly left out in the *Revelation*, I did at last conclude that this must not be (whatever particular conversions of some part of them might happen) until the final destruction of the Popish party; whose idolatry, villanies, lies and legends, and bloody temper, is the chief thing that prejudices them against Christianity. So that I did at length conclude, that the resurrection or revival of the antient Jewish Church is understood by the resurrection of the Martyrs, *chap. 20. v. 4*, who being thus added to the true Reformed Christian Church, and making up one body with those gentle believers, in *the fulness* or ripened state of the *Gentile Church*, shall be to them

See Rom.
11. 15, 25.

as *life from the dead*.
One notion only I crave leave to add to those of the above-cited author on these heads, *viz.* that I look upon the *Millenary State* to be the most eminent and illustrious time of the *Christocracy*, (I hope none will reject the word, though it be new, seeing it is so expressive of the thing) wherein Christ will revive, but in a more spiritual and excellent way, the antient *Theocracy* of the *Jews*. For as under *Moses*, the judges and kings of *Judah*, God acted as king

* The same author, *ibid.* and on the 11th of the *Romans*, and in the *Appendix* to the same.

king of the *Jews* (or Christ rather in a more peculiar and immediate sense, as I may perhaps have an occasion afterwards to prove to the world) so I do expect, that after God has delivered his Christian Church from spiritual *Egypt*, and destroyed his enemies in the Red Sea of their own blood; he will once more exert his power and authority, and our blessed Redeemer will reign as king of his people, not indeed in such a pompous way as among the *Jews* of old (for *John* saw no temple in the *New Jerusalem*; Rev. 21. 22,) but in a way adapted to the *New Testament* Dispensation, and more immediately preparative unto, and typical of the state of glory in Heaven, after the day of judgment is over.

And now that I am upon this great prophetic event, I cannot forbear to give you a new conjecture upon the *last numbers of Daniel*. For his 70 weeks of years, chap. 9. 24, are already remarkably elapsed in the incarnation and death of our Redeemer. And the number of 2000 days, chap. 8, are plainly to be interpreted of the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes* his profanation of the sanctuary: for as it is restricted to that short period, as is plain to any that will attentively consider the words themselves, ver. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, especially if compared with ver. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, so the Spirit of God, by designing this period by the title of *βυρδμυρον*, or a period of evenings-mornings, i. e. natural days, does plainly assure us that we are not to interpret these days prophetically for years, as we are allowed to do the 70 weeks and other numbers. To return therefore to the *last numbers of Daniel*; there are two distinct periods of time, as I take them to be (though all other interpreters go another way) to be found in his 12th chapter. The 1st is of a time, times and a half, or three years and a half, ver. 7, i. e. 1290 prophetic days, or years, as *Daniel* himself has it explained to him, ver. 11. This therefore is the same

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period

period of time that *John* borrows from *Daniel*, and accommodates to the duration of *Rome* Papal; excepting that there is the difference of 30 days, or years; only that *æra* of this period in *Daniel*, is vastly different from that of *John*: for, as to the latter, we have seen it already; but as to the former, *Daniel* fixes it at the scattering of the holy people, or the Jewish Nation, ver. 7. and at the taking away the daily sacrifice, and the setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate, v. 11. Now our Saviour, who was certainly the best expositor of his own word, explains this abomination that maketh desolate, and which was to pollute and ruin the sanctuary, to be nothing else but the idolatrous and desolating Roman army; as we see by comparing *Mat.* 24. 15, with *Luke* 21. 20, 21. The *epocha* therefore of the time, times and a half in *Daniel*, or his 1290 years, must be the year 70 from the birth of our Saviour, when *Jerusalem* was taken, if we should consider the beginning of the setting up the abomination that maketh desolate. But seeing the *æra* of this number is not the beginning of the conquest of the *Jews*, but the compleat scattering of that nation, or the accomplishing the scattering of the power of the holy people, as the words are, ver. 7, and the full setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate, ver. 11, which was not done till *Hadrian's* time; who fully conquered the *Jews*, and built a city near the ruins of *Jerusalem*, which he called *Ælia*, building at the same time a temple to *Jupiter*, on the ground where the temple had stood, and engraving over the gate of this new city the figure of a swine in derision of the *Jews*. Now this work was finished in or about the year 135. From whence the period of 1290 years leads us down to *A. C.* 1425. which, in prophetic reckoning, is the year 1407. About which time the Papal power was at its utmost elevation; for after this time the *Hussites*, *Albigenses*, *Wicklifites*. *Waldenses*,

denfes, Picards, &c. began to fall before the *Romanists*, until they were, in a manner, totally extirpated before another century had well nigh run out. Now this dismal period expires about this time; and then there follows the *2d period* of 1335 days or years, *ver. 12*, which being calculated from the year 1407, terminates *An. Dom. 2742, i. e. 2722* of prophetic reckoning: which therefore includes the *begun downfall* of the *Papacy* under the *7 Vials*; and the *final accomplishment* thereof afterwards, together with the *greatest part* of the *Millennium*, and consequently the great *Conversion* of the *Jewish Nation* during that period. And perhaps the begun apostacy of *Jewish* and *Gentile* Christians (which is to issue in an universal war against the saints, upon the expiration of the *Millennium*) may begin about that year 2722.

And now, that I have come again upon prophetic numbers, I shall venture to digress a little more still, in giving you some further illustration of these two great periods, from the *14th* chapter of the *Revelations*. Of which take these few hints at this time. In the *1st Place* then, ye have a description of Christ's followers adhering to him, during the reign and rage of Antichrist, from *v. 1*, to *v. 5*, inclusive: which must therefore reach down from *An. 606*, or *758* rather, to *An. 1517*. After which we have the begun revival of the Church of Christ represented in the *2d Place*, by the testimonies of the three angels, succeeding one another. The *1 Angel* has a commission to preach the gospel purely to all nations, *v. 6, 7*, which must therefore begin with the preaching of *Zuinglius* and *Luther*; and does include, I humbly suppose, the periods of the *four first Vials*. The *2 Angel* follows, *v. 8*, and proclaims the fall of *Babylon*, or the *Papacy*; and must therefore be synchronical with the *5th Vial*, being poured out upon the seat of the Beast. The *3 Angel* gives

men warning, that they should not join with the Beast, and denounceth severe judgments against them that shall be found to do so, v. 10, &c. Which therefore relates to the last part of the time of the *6th Vial*, when the unclean spirits go forth to insinuate into the nations, in order to engage them to make war against the saints, *chap. 16. ver. 13, 14, 15, 16.* Now after all these things, we have in the *3d Place*, a typical or emblematical account of the deliverance of the Church, and of the destruction of the bloody persecuting Antichristian party. Therefore we have 1. The emblem of *an harvest*; which seems immediately to relate to Christ's gathering his Church into a happy state, v. 14, 15, 16. And then 2. We have the representation of the final destruction of the *Popish Party*, under the emblem of a *Vintage*: wherein the *bloody clusters* of the several *Popish Fraternities and Communities* are to be bruised and squeezed to death in the *wine-press of God's wrath*, v. 17—20. But I have spoken already to this great period of time above, which issues in the *blessed Millennium*; and therefore I shall say no more to it at this time.

Only there is one thing that falls in my way here, which ought not to be passed over in silence; and that is, to what period we are to refer the happy state of the *New Jerusalem*, *chap. 21*, and of the blessed *River and Tree of Life*, *chap. 22.* For I find interpreters at a mighty loss this way, whether these relate to the *Millennium* or *Heaven itself*, after the day of Judgment is past. And indeed there are some things that seem inconsistent with either of these states. For what is said of the *Nations flocking into this new state and walking in the light of it, and of the Kings of the earth that they shall bring in their glory and honour to the Church*, *chap. 21. 24, 25, 26.* seems not to agree with the notion the Scripture gives us of the state of the glorified in the Higher Heaven, after

the Resurrection; but does exactly suit with the peaceful reign of the Saints, when *Jerusalem* or the Church shall be exalted above the nations, who shall all run in to her. And yet upon the other hand, there are things also that seem to be too great even for the blessed *Millennium*, as we have given the notion of it above. Such is the account of the perfection of this state, *that it will be exempted from all death, sorrow, crying, and pain*, chap. 21. 4. And yet as the former expressions may be adapted to the state of the Church triumphant in Heaven, in a spiritual sense, so these last expressions may be made to suit also with the state of the Church on earth during the *Millennium* in a comparative sense, *i. e.* if considered with respect to the preceding afflicted condition of Christians.

Therefore seeing this last glorious scene of affairs may be interpreted in relation either to the one or the other of these periods, I conclude that we ought to interpret it of both, *viz.* of the *Millennium* in a *first sense*, and of the future glory of the Church in Heaven, in a *second and compleat sense*. For as I observed above, that the sacred prophecies, particularly that in the 24th chapter of *Matthew*, and 2d chapter of the 2d Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, are to be interpreted both in a first and second, or ultimate sense: so I do believe we must of necessity understand the account of the New Heavens and New Earth, and of the heavenly *Jerusalem* in this book. And if this be once supposed, then it will be easy to adjust the seemingly different figures used by the Holy Spirit, in this place: seeing the whole is so contrived, that it may correspond both with the Millenary state and the future state of glory; *viz. to the first as an emblem and type of the latter*. So that as the destruction of the *Jewish Nation* and Church, is given in such words, *Mat. 24.* as to become this way an emblem of the final destruction of the world; so

so likewise is the *Millennium* so painted and described, Rev. 21. as to be designedly given as a type of the state of the Church triumphant in Heaven, after the Day of Judgment is over.

A (4) *observation* from what I said before, is this; That our Reformers did not rashly, but upon just grounds, desert the Church of Rome, as *Antichristian* and *Apostatical*.

For not to insist upon prophetic indications of the *Roman* Church being indeed the great Antichrist; there are four things that lay a just foundation for all honest men's leaving that interest; viz. 1. *Gross errors*, such as *Purgatory*, *human merits* and *works of supererogation*, *indulgences*, *transubstantiation*, &c. 2. *Horrid idolatry*, in worshipping Angels, Saints and canonized persons, together with images, statues, crucifixes, and a consecrated wafer. 3. The *pretended infallibility of the Roman See*, in imposing upon men's consciences what they please, and debarring us from reading the Scriptures ourselves, or making use of our own reason in the matters of religion. And 4. The *dreadful tyranny of that party*, seen and felt both in their inhuman cruelties, persecutions, massacres, and diabolical barbarities used against all those that differ from them. For the proof of all which things, let *Chamierus* be consulted, together with *Heydegerus de Babylone magna*, *Turretinus de necessaria Secessione ab Ecclesia Romana*; and besides innumerable others, *Stillingfleet's* late pieces against the *Romanists*; for my time allows me not now to enlarge upon any of these heads.

Only, that I may not leave you without some specimen of poetry, I shall copy out in *English* the 12 Articles of the *Romish* Faith, additional to the 12 Christian ones, which are contained in the Apostles Creed, as to the sum and substance of them. These 12 additional Articles are contained in the famous Bull of Pope Pius IV. dated at Rome in the year 1564,
in

in the Ides of *November*, and the 5th year of his Pontificate, which is to be found at the end of the printed Canons and Decrees of the Council of *Trent*; where after an enumeration of the primitive Articles, beginning with, *credo in unum Deum*, &c. *I believe in one God*, &c. he proceeds to charge all men that would be saved, to own and swear unto the following Articles also; anathematizing all that do not so. These begin thus: *Apostolicas & Ecclesiasticas Traditiones*, &c. which take in *English* thus.

1. I do also (*i. e.* together with the Articles of the Apostles Creed) most firmly admit and embrace the Apostolical and Ecclesiastical traditions, and all other observations and constitutions of the same (*i. e.* the Roman) Church.

2. I do admit the Sacred Scriptures in the same sense that holy Mother Church doth; whose business it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of them; which I will receive and interpret according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

3. I do profess and believe, that there are seven Sacraments of the new Law, truly and properly so called, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary to the Salvation of Mankind, though not all of them to every person. These are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Marriage, which do all of them confer Grace. And I do believe that of these, Baptism, Confirmation and Orders, may not be repeated without Sacrilege. I do also receive and admit the received and approved Rites of the Catholick (*i. e.* Roman) Church, in her solemn administration of the above-said Sacraments.

4. I do receive all and every thing that hath been defined and declared by the holy Council of *Trent* concerning Original Sin and Justification.

5. I do profess, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper and propitiatory Sacrifice

for the quick and the dead: and that in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially, the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is a Conversion made of the whole Substance of the Bread into the Body, and of the whole Substance of the Wine into the Blood; which conversion the Catholick Church calls *Transubstantiation*.

6. I confess that under one kind only, whole and entire Christ, and a true Sacrament, is taken and received.

7. I do firmly believe that there is a *Purgatory*, and that the Souls kept Prisoners there, do receive help by the Suffrages of the Faithful.

8. I do likewise believe that the Saints reigning with Christ are to be *worshipped and prayed unto*, and that they do offer Prayers unto God for us, and that their Relicks are to be had in veneration.

9. I do most firmly assert, that the *Images of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God, and of other Saints*, ought to be had and retained, and that *due honour and veneration* ought to be given to them.

10. I do affirm, that the power of *Indulgences* was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is very beneficial to Christian people.

11. I do acknowledge the holy Catholick and Apostolick *Roman Church*, to be the Mother and Mistress of all Churches: And I do promise and swear true Obedience to *the Bishop of Rome*, the Successor of *St. Peter*, the Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ.

12. I do undoubtedly receive and profess all other things which have been delivered, defined, and declared by the Sacred Canons and Oecumenical Councils, and especially by the holy Synod of *Trent*; and all things contrary thereunto, and all Heresies condemned, rejected and anathematized by the Church

Church, I do likewise condemn, reject, and anathematize.

Lo here, my friends, ye have a fair prospect of Popery, without any misrepresentation, or so much as comment: for these are the words of the Creed itself, which all Papists are obliged to believe and profess, in order to salvation; and which all those who enter into religious orders do solemnly swear unto. And therefore it is plain that these things are not looked upon by the Church of *Rome*, as disputable opinions, but as necessary articles of faith: and therefore let the author of *the Case of the Regale and Pontificat* see how he can make good the last concluding words of his book, which are these: *Concors Romanæ & Reformatæ Ecclesiæ Fides, &c. i. e. The faith of the Roman and Reformed Church doth agree, or is the same, &c.* For if these things be so slight and trivial to him, that he can (as the Popish *Gallican* Church doth) swallow and digest all, excepting the 11th article; he must pardon others, if they continue in the faith of the Reformed Church, as that which is opposite to the *Roman* Creed, in so many momentous particulars.

Nay, let me add one thing further here, as a necessary confectary or inference from what I have said in relation to this consideration we are still upon; *That, as our Reformers did justly separate from the Romish Church; so we have just ground also to continue separated from that Antichristian party.*

Let others, under pretence of a dread of what they call schism, run back into Antichristian errors and heresies. Let them, if they are so disposed, forsake pure Christianity, that they may promote the priest's power, and adorn their altars with gold and jewels. And let them, in order to enslave men's consciences and bodies both, found a retreat to *Babylon* again. We, I hope, know our duty better, than to run the risk of damning our souls, by becoming

Rev. 18.4,
5.

runnegados to that bloody and wicked party, against whose abominations so many thousands of our ancestors witnessed, under racks and torments, at the stake in *Smithfield* and elsewhere. They believed, that what they did and suffered was in obedience to the call of God, saying, *Come out from the Apostate Romish Church, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.* And God forbid that any Temptation should bring any of us back again to that sink of all impurities and errors, after we have enjoyed the sunshine of the gospel, in it's purity and power, so long. Therefore, seeing we know what interest we are to keep to, let us be faithful to it, by doing all we can for it's security, establishment, and honour. And if God call us to suffer for it, let us act as the former heroes of the Reformation have done before us, that Christ may be glorified, and the Church edified by us, whether it be by doing or suffering, by life or by death.

The (5) and last observation that I shall propose to your thoughts, as the conclusion of all I have said, is this: *that though we are not to live to see the great and final destruction of the Papacy, the blessed Millennium, or Christ's last coming to judge the world: yet seeing death is the equivalent of all these to us, if we be so happy as to get into Paradise; we ought therefore accordingly to spend and improve our time, that we may partake of the future glory when we go hence.*

I say, death is the equivalent of all these things to us, if we be so happy as to get into Paradise. For then we shall get the conquest over all Antichristian enemies, and be with Christ in a better state than any earthly Millennium can be supposed to be, waiting until he come to judge the world, and till we appear also with him in glory, having reassumed our then glorious bodies.

Improve

Improve your time therefore, and all the opportunities and advantages of it, with your utmost diligence and seriousness, as remembering that ye are dying and accountable creatures, and that your time is given you for this very end, that ye may prepare for a better world.

And now that we see the beginning, not only of a *new year*, but of a *new age*, I must give a further vent to my zeal and concern for your souls good, upon this great and practical head, *viz. the improvement of time, with respect to the upper world*; that when I am gone, I may, by what I have said, and am about to say, continue to speak still to those that shall survive me, and even (if this discourse last so long) to succeeding generations also. And I suppose ye will the more readily bear with me in this, when ye remember with what unanimity and importunity ye desired me to print a sermon on this head, which I preached on *New-year's day*, 1699, from *Psal. 90. v. 12*. For seeing I was prevented in yielding to your desire then, I shall lay hold on this opportunity to make amends, in some measure at least, for that seeming neglect, by presenting you with some useful hints on this subject.

And here, as I begin to speak upon this head, the story of *Xerxes* comes to my remembrance; who, when he saw his vast army of a thousand thousand men march by (with whom he expected to have swallowed up the poor *Grecians*) is reported to have wept, upon this thought, that before a hundred years should run out, none of all that multitude would be alive: little imagining, that before the end of that very year, he was to see the destruction of almost all of them, and draw his last breath himself also. For methinks it is a serious and weighty thing, to think that before the end of this century, all those that now make a figure in the world, will have finished their course, and be gathered into heaven or hell;

new actors coming up on the stage in their stead, And yet, while I lengthen out my meditation to the end of a century, I find just reason to contract my thoughts, and suppose I see both you and all others, that croud our streets and places of worship, or fill remoter islands and continents, gradually dropping into an eternity, some this year, some the next, and so on.

But to proceed to the consideration of the subject in hand; I suppose I need not tell you what we are to understand by the improvement of time; seeing this is too plain to need any explication in a general sense. And neither can it be dark to Christians, in a spiritual sense: for it can denote nothing else, but such a rational and religious regulation of our time, and disposal of our talents and opportunities, especially as we live under the advantages and means of the gospel, that we may ever be occupied in doing and getting good, so as to find favour in the sight of God, and attain afterwards to the happy enjoyment of him. For seeing, as the apostle says, now is our accepted time and day of salvation, we ought to take heed to ourselves that we receive not the grace of God in vain. We ought to reckon therefore that this space of our life is given us, that we may be taken up in promoting the honour of God and our own and other men's good, as being, in all these respects, in a state of trial. Let us therefore improve our time, by labouring to gain our own assent and consent fully to the terms of the gospel; by studying the word of God more and more; by a close and impartial trial of ourselves; by frequent and fervent prayer; and by an universal and constant obedience to all God's laws and institutions. And let us argue ourselves into this as our duty, by considering, how dearly our Lord Jesus has purchased our day of grace and opportunity of salvation; how many have been damned and lost for ever, by their not improving

2 Cor. 6.
1, 2.

ing this talent of time ; how dreadful the condemnation of such will be, who chuse darkness rather than light ; how unreasonable it is, to be so careful of the body, and so regardless of the soul ; how strange it is, that we should not do that for our eternal advantage, which worldlings do for a little temporal gain ; and lastly, how uncertain we are of the continuance of our time and season of grace.

And seeing, in order to improve time aright, we ought to lay hold of all the special seasons and peculiar opportunities, which God puts into our hand for this end ; these will deserve to be particularly considered by us. But since it is the work of prudence, that every man know and observe his own circumstances and providential occurrences, in order to a right improvement of them accordingly ; all that I can do here, is to hint at some generals this way. Therefore 1. Let me advise you to make a right improvement of the circumstances of your outward lot in the world. Are you in a state of *prosperity* ? then be thankful to your gracious Benefactor. Are ye honoured ? improve this, that God may be honoured through you. Are ye in any place of power and authority ? lay yourselves out to advance the kingdom of God among men. Are ye rich ? remember what *Solomon* says, *that wisdom is good with an inheritance* ; and therefore serve God with what he gives you. Eccles. 7. 11. But if ye be in *adversity*, despond not : but remember, that as prosperity gives men greater advantages for doing good ; adversity affords more seasons usually for getting good. For in the day of adversity we are more ready to *think and consider*, than in the time of prosperity, as *Solomon* says : for then is the time and season, to know ourselves better and God more, and to prepare more readily and thoroughly for another world. Eccles. 7. 14.

2. Improve your circumstances, in relation to company

pany or retirement. If ye be hurried with *company* labour to gain that by them, which may in some measure make up your loss of time. If ye can get no good from them, then study if possible to do them good, by insinuating what may tend to their advantage: and then ye can have no reason to reckon your time lost. But if ye enjoy the company of good and wise men, it is not to be believed what profit and advantage may be got by mutual discourses to edification, where men are communicative, and can bear with different apprehensions about things, without running into heats and quarrellings. But if we are shut out from company, we may justly look upon *solitude and retirement* as a happy opportunity of advantage and profit, if we do but know how to improve the same, by filling up such seasons with study, meditation, and prayer. 3. Improve the means and opportunities of grace and salvation.

Tit. 2. 14,

For the end of all that Christ has suffered and done for us, is *to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to himself a people zealous of good works*. Therefore let us so hear the word preached, and so join with the prayers of the Church, and so partake of the ordinances of Christ, particularly that of the Lord's

1 Pet. 2. 5.

Supper; *that we may be built up a spiritual house, as lively stones concurring to the raising up of such an edifice; and that we may become also a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable by Jesus Christ to God*.

And 4. if at any time or upon any occasion, ye find the *Spirit of God* to move your thoughts and affections more sensibly than usually, as the angel moved the waters of the pool, of old: oh! my friends neglect not such a fair gale and favourable opportunity; but improve this happy season, and strike the iron when hot and malleable. For how dreadful must it be to quench the Holy Spirit, and stifle the convictions, motions, and influences thereof, especially such as are sensible and peculiar!

But seeing, to begin aright, is one great mean to carry on any thing successfully, we ought to set about the improving of our time as early as we can, without any delay or procrastination in a matter of this weight and moment. For it is only our present time that we can reckon our's. For as our *yesterdays* are irrecoverable; so our *to-morrows* are but *may be's* and uncertainties. Therefore we *are always called to hear God's voice, *to-day*, if we will do it at all. And therefore let us *not delay, but make haste, to keep God's righteous and holy commandments.*

* See Heb.
4. 7. & C.
3. 7, 13.
15. 2 Cor.
6. 2. Luk.
19. 42.
Ila. 55. 6.
Job 22.
21. Mat.
5. 25.
Psal. 119.
60.

Now if we would improve our time and life to advantage this way, let us be sure not to neglect the morning of time. And here then let me put you in mind of *four mornings* of time. The 1. is *the morning of your life*, i. e. the time of your youth, health and strength. Such of you, as have lost this season in whole or in part, pray double your diligence, in the improvement of what remains of your time. But such of you as are young, be advised to remember your Creator in the days of your youth, and act so as ye may afterwards look back upon your past days with satisfaction and pleasure. 2. The *morning of every day* is a time to be peculiarly improved for God and your own good: for the doing so has a mighty influence upon us as to the right spending of the rest of the day. It is a season, that is not only *amica musis*, a friend to study, as the old saying is, but that is favourable also *orationi & devotioni*, to prayer and devotion: for while our minds are fresh and undisturbed with the hurries of company and business, it is certainly the fittest time for duty as well as study. And therefore the *saints of old were careful not to neglect this season. 3. Improve the *morning of every week* carefully, viz. the Lord's Day. For as we discharge our duty then, we may expect God's blessing through the week more or less. But if we refuse to give God what is his due on his own day,

Ecclef. 12.
1.

* See Psal.
5. 3. & 92.
2. Job 1.
5. Mar. 1.
35. & Acts
5. 21.

day, we must not think it strange, if God withdraw from us on those days that he has allowed us to serve ourselves upon. And hence it is no wonder, if we find that true, which many have confessed with sorrow at the hour of death, that the prophanation of the Lord's-day has been the inlet to all their after-sins and miseries both. And 4. perhaps it may not be unprofitable for us, to set apart *the morning of every year*, to review what we have done and what has happened to us the year past, and to beg God's blessing through the year following. It has been the practice of some holy persons to do this: some reckoning the year, as it is usual with us in our computations, from the 1st day of *January*; and others reckoning it from the day of their birth, or baptism, or conversion: in all which every one may take which way pleaseth him best. And now, that we enter upon the morning or beginning of a new century; let me beseech you to begin this work now, if ye have neglected it during the years of the last age, which ye have run through, whether these have been more or fewer.

Having thus given you an account of time, and the opportunities and seasons of it to be improved; I shall proceed, *to recommend this duty from three considerations*; and then to *direct you how to do it, by proposing three rules to be observed this way*.

In the 1st place therefore, let me earnestly *recommend this duty to you from three weighty considerations*.

The (1.) *consideration* is this, That it is the duty and wisdom of every one of us, to be duly and deeply impressed with the sense of the worth and value of time.

I might take occasion here to shew you, from innumerable examples, that the best and wisest men in all ages, both Christians and Heathens, have been under the deepest and most constant impressions of the value of time. But, as this would be too long for
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this place, so it is needless to insist upon it; seeing I believe ye can as little form an *idea* of a wise or good man, that does not value and improve time, as I can.

Therefore I suppose there is no need to prove to you the worth and preciousness of time: to you, I say, who know the uncertainty of it, and yet how much depends upon the improvement and loss of it. But if any of you need any awakening this way, consider how valuable time will appear to a convinced sinner when he lies upon a death-bed, who sees himself dropping into another world, and yet apprehends that his peace is not made with God. O, cries the poor wretch, that I had spent less of my time on the world and my lusts, and more of it in minding the good of my own soul! O that I had those hours and days back again that I spent in taverns and bad company! O for a year, or a month, or a week at least of health and strength, to make my peace with God! And pray, my friends, were ye never sick, and under some such thoughts then? Were ye not sensible then of mis-spent time? Or did ye never promise amendment and reformation, if God should recover you? Where is now the performance of your vows? O, if there be any that forget God, and neglect to do as they have promised and resolved, let them consider their duty and interest in time, lest God tear them in pieces when there is none to deliver them. Alas! my friends, what would those poor wretches give for one day, nay for one hour, who are now in the infernal prison? What would they give for one offer of a Saviour, who are now lamenting their slighting of the gospel, and their mis-spending their time and opportunities of salvation? Therefore do ye learn to value time more, and improve it better, before it be too late to retrieve lost opportunities. And this leads me to another consideration. Therefore,

The (2d) consideration is, That it is our wisdom,

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not only to be impressed with the sense of the worth and value of time, but to be duly and deeply affected and influenced this way, so as to set about the improvement of it, as our greatest and most concerning duty and interest.

For it is not speculation but practice that we are to mind here : and therefore if our apprehensions of the worth of time do not influence us to improve it, they will only tend to our greater condemnation. Therefore, that what I have said may so affect you, as to incite you to your duty this way ; I shall not grudge a little pains in writing further on this head, in hope that ye will not be weary in reading what is written. Take it not amiss therefore, if I address you with some seriousness and warmth of affection, and, through you, all others that may cast their eyes upon these sheets.

My dear friends, some of you have lived twenty, some thirty, some forty, some fifty, some sixty, or more years in the world. Now I beseech you to consider what ye have been doing all this time. Have your performances borne any proportion to the mercies ye have received from God ? Have ye been faithful to improve your talents for your God and Saviour ? Have your convictions brought forth a saving conversion ? Have your resolutions and promises been all performed ? Has it been a matter of conscience to you, to serve God with the best of your time, the greatest vigour of your thoughts, the utmost energy of love and delight, and in a word with all your heart and strength ?

If ye have been deficient this way, then pray consider, not only how impossible it is to bring back any part of the time that is past, but how little, or at least how uncertain the time is, that remains to be lived over. And if any be secure this way, because they are young, or strong and healthful, let them remember how often the old carry the young to the grave,

grave, and the weak and sickly see robust and vigorous persons drop off before them. And what is our life at longest? Does not the scripture labour, as it were, under a want of metaphors, to describe it's vanity, when it compares it to a hand-breadth, a span, a vapour, the grass that is soon mowed down, the flower that quickly fades, the shadow that declines, and the tale that is told? How poor a thing then is it, to be able no otherwise to number our days and years, than by our being born at such a time, and having lived to such another time? There is therefore no more unreasonable desire in the world, than to live long, where there is no concern to live well: for this is only to wish to have more time to mis-spend, to sin longer than others, and to be more miserable in the other world. Besides, that it is impossible, as the course of things is now, to live long, in a proper sense: for as the following distich expresses it:

Vivere quisq; diu querit, bene vivere nemo:

At bene quisq; potest, vivere nemo diu.

That is;

To live long, all desire; to live well, none:

Yet all may live well, but none can live long.

For is it not for this very end that time is given us, that it may be improved and lived well, in order to our being fitted and prepared for the happy state of a glorious immortality? Surely God did never make so glorious a creature as man, endued with an immortal soul, merely to live the life of the beast, to eat, and drink, and sleep, or to enjoy his sensitive lusts and pleasures.

Think then, my friends, that according as ye improve or misimprove time, ye are to be happy or miserable for an eternity. For we are now in a state of trial, and upon our behaviour, in order to be rewarded or punished afterwards, as we shall be found to have acted, when we come to be judged: there-

Ecc. 11.9. fore we may rejoice now and take our pleasure as we please. But we have reason to rejoice with trembling, when we remember that we are to be called before God, and judged for all we do now. For they that live in the flesh, according to their lusts, must give an account to him, that is to be the Judge of the quick and the dead. And then every one of them will hear that dreadful word, *Take the unprofitable servant, and cast him into the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Consider therefore, that it is impossible to recal any moment of time that is lost in a proper and physical sense: and that thus it is a foolish and ridiculous wish; *O mihi prateritos referat si Jupiter annos!* O if God would give me back the years that are past! But yet in a moral sense, we may be said to bring back past time, when by doubling our diligence we do, in some sort, retrieve the mis-improvement of former days. But then it must be remembered, that this must be done now or never; for if our time comes to an end here, there is no returning to a state of trial again, such as we now enjoy: *If a man die, shall he live again?* No, alas, says Job, *For as the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away; so he that goeth to the grave shall come up no more (i. e. to live on earth again, as the following words explain the meaning.) He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.* Therefore let us all say with him (and improve the thought) *When a few years are come, then shall I go the way whence I shall not return.*

Now, besides all these things, it may be of great use to enforce this consideration, to take a view of the complexion and genius of our age, or the time wherein we live. For if the Apostle Paul, when he exhorts his contemporary Christians to redeem the time, gives this as the reason of his advice, *because the days are evil*; I am sure we have much more reason to call the

the days wherein we live by this name. For the sense of the Apostle, when he calls the days wherein he lived *evil days*, is no doubt this chiefly, if not only, that they were afflictive and perilous times: for times of troubles are * called *evil times*, or *evil days*, frequently in scripture. But we may justly take this in a larger sense, in reference to our times; for an age or time may be denominated evil, either with respect to the abounding of *errors*, *profaneness*, or *calamities*. And upon all these accounts these days of our's may be justly said to be evil. For *as to errors*, how many and how gross are these? How many deny the Lord that bought them? How many oppose his divinity and satisfaction both? Yea, how many revile him as an impostor, and ridicule all revealed religion? Nay, how many dare blaspheme God, and deny his being, and even the first principles of natural religion? And, *as to profaneness and immorality*, where did we ever hear or read of more among Christians? Nay, it may be a question, if ever the heathens were worse than most Christians are now. And again, *As for calamities and troubles*, we see what other Churches have suffered of late, and do suffer still: and we see in how tottering a condition all the Protestant interest is. And though I believe it will prove a burdensome stone to the enemies of Christ; yet how far God may suffer them to prevail for a time, none of us know: only I am afraid we are upon the brink of very great troubles. And that (as I have hinted already) as we have been, like *Israel* of old, peculiarly blest with mercies and privileges, and are as peculiar and singular in sinning; so we are like to be punished in a peculiar and particular manner also. So that if there be (as sure there is) a rule to judge of the connexion of mercies, sins and judgments, we may see our case, as well as that of *Israel* of old, in the prophetic threatenings of God to that people, when he says,

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* See
Gen. 47. 9.
Ps. 77. 19.
Amos 5.
13, 18.

Amos 3. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.*

Seeing therefore this is the state and complexion of our time, let us take heed to ourselves, that we be not involved in the sins of it, lest we come under the judgments also that seem to hasten on this generation. Consider, for this end, the Apostle's advice;

1 Cor. 11. 3 *Beware, says he, lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.* Let us not therefore bear the instruction that causeth us to err from the words of knowledge; but let us beware, lest being led away with the error of the wicked, we fall from our own steadfastness.

But yet, be not so selfish as to mind only your own concerns, but remember that ye are members of a city, of a church and nation, and that ye are members also of the Catholick Church of Christ that is every where dispersed. And therefore act as under all these ties and relations. And if ye can do no more, intercede at least with God, that he may be gracious: *stand in the gap*, that ye may, if possible, avert his displeasure. Act therefore as *serious, faithful, and importunate remembrancers of the Lord*, giving him no rest, but crying unto him night and day until he arise, and until he make his Zion and Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth.

Isa. 62. 6,
Luk. 18. 7.

There is yet a (3.) consideration which I would add to the former, in order the more effectually to recommend this duty to you, viz. *The improvement of your time.* And this is what is indeed frequently insisted upon, but I am afraid very little lived up to, viz. *That we are in the sight, and under the inspection of an all-seeing God, who is to be our Judge at last.*

O, my friends, is this a matter only of speculation to you? Dare any of you do that in the sight of God, which ye would be ashamed to do in the view of the world? I remember I have heard of an eminently
holy

holy man, who, being tempted by a harlot to commit lewdness with her, in a place where she was mistress and had the command, seemed to consent for the present, with this condition only, that she should find out a close retirement, where none could be present and see what they did. Upon which she carried him from chamber to chamber, and from place to place. But he had still something to object against the privacy of every one of them. At length she brought him to a very dark and obscure corner, telling him that none could see what was done there but God and the devil. What, said he, is that nothing? You must carry me where neither God nor the devil can see us, else I will never do what you desire. And I remember also I have heard of another, who being tempted in like manner, consented upon condition of having liberty to chuse the place. Which being granted, he chose the public market-place. When she refused this, saying, she could not for shame do so in the open view of the world: he replied, that he durst far less do this in the sight of God; and asked, how she durst do that in the sight of God, which she was ashamed to do before men.

Even the heathen moralist, *Seneca*, adviseth men to act in all things as if they had both God, and the wisest and best of men looking on. *Set Cato, Scipio, or Lælius before you*, says he, *or some such excellent person, upon whose appearing even the most wicked person would be frighted from doing amiss openly.* But he adds in another place; *What will it avail you, to bide yourselves and your actings from men, since there is nothing concealed from God? for he looks into our breasts, and is present in our very minds and hearts.* And elsewhere; *It avails a man nothing, says he, to shut up or stifle conscience, since every thing we do lies open to God's view; and therefore our great wisdom is to act so, that we may approve ourselves to him.*

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How consonant are such expressions to the sacred standard of our holy religion? And what shall we answer to our Master at the great day, if we suffer such persons to exceed and outrun us, who are Christians? Let us therefore mind the principle that swayed *Joseph*, when he said, under a very great temptation, considering his low and obnoxious condition; *Shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?* And let us imitate *David*, who set the Lord always before him, and looked upon him as present at his right hand, to the end that he might never be moved, but be encouraged still to trust in him. For we are ever to remember, that our secret, as well as publick sins, are set in the light of God's countenance; seeing the darkness hides us no more from God, than the meridian light of the sun.

Gen. 39.9.
Psal. 16.8.
Psal. 90.8.
Pl. 139.12.

But we must consider likewise, that we have not only a constant witness and inspector of our actions without us, but one within us, even our own conscience; which doth excuse or accuse us, according as we behave and act. And as one says well on this head, *Quid prodest non habere conscium, habenti conscientiam?* i. e. What avails it to have no witness of our actions, while we have a conscience that keeps an exact register of all we do? Only we must remember, that this is but a secondary witness; for if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

1 John 3.
20.

And now, my friends, I have done with what I had to say to the three considerations, from which I proposed to recommend and inforce this great duty of improving our time. And I leave it to you to consider, whether what I have said be not sufficient this way, through the blessing of God, and your pains and concern to apply to yourselves what has been said.

Therefore in the 2d place, I proceed to direct you, how ye may attain rightly and successfully to improve your time to the best advantage, as ye are Christians

Christians and accountable creatures. And this I shall do, by proposing *three rules*, which will take in all that is necessary or useful this way: though the *first rule* is the principal and only direct one, which doth take in the whole of our duty this way; the *second and third* being only subservient unto this, though exceedingly useful, if not necessary also, in their places.

The (1.) Rule is this, *that ye take heed, that ye lose not your time, and the opportunities and seasons thereof, by sin and vanity: but that it be always filled up, with the conscientious and diligent discharge of all necessary duties.*

This being, as I said already, the *principal rule*, in order to the regulation of our time; and being so contrived, as to direct us both *negatively* and *positively*, as to *what we are to avoid* and *what we are to do*; I shall accordingly consider it distinctly in *both the parts* of it.

The 1 *part* of this rule teaches us, *how time is lost, and what we are therefore to avoid, in order to the right improvement of it.* And it is necessary to premise this, before we consider the other part: for we can only then apply ourselves to fill up our time wisely, in the performance of those duties, in the discharge whereof the redemption and improvement of time consists; when we apprehend what those things are, which are detrimental and hurtful to our souls, both here and hereafter.

Now, in the general, we are to take care to rescue our time out of the hand of those two grand robbers, that thief it away from us, *viz. sin and vanity.* For as we are carefully to avoid the mispending of our time, by thinking, doing or speaking, what is sinful in itself: so we are to take heed of such things, which though they are not simply sinful in themselves, are yet such trivial matters or by-concerns, as become sinful to us, when we

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spend too much time upon them, or mind them as if they were our most weighty and principal businesses.

But because those things, that are evil and sinful in themselves, such as blasphemies and lies, immorality and profaneness, ought not to be so much as named among Christians, or have a moment's time allowed them, so as to be entertained or thought upon with delight or design, far less brought forth in life and action, we shall therefore pass by these wholly at present; in order to consider those things that, though lawful in themselves, ought not to be so minded, as to take up all or most of our time. Allow me then, to give you my advice in these things following.

Be not too prodigal of your time, in the gratification of your senses, and the services of your body. Let the cultivation and adorning of your souls take up more of your time, than the clothing and dressing of your bodies. Be not buried in sleep and sloth too long, while time is so short and uncertain, and ye have so much business to fill it up with. Neither do ye allow yourselves more time than is necessary or convenient, for the feeding and pampering of your bodies. Be not like them therefore, who are so severely reproved by God, for living sensually in this world, when they ought to have minded higher things.

Amos 6.
3—6.

Of whom this sad character is given; "*That they put away far from them the evil day; that they lay upon beds of ivory, and did eat the lambs out of the flock and the calves out of the stall, chanting at the sound of the Viol, drinking wine out of bowls, and anointing themselves with the chiefest ointments: but that in the mean time they were altogether unmindful of the state of the Church, and no way grieved for the afflictions of Joseph.*"

Rom. 13.
13, 14.

Therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, *let us walk honestly, as in the day* (or clear sunshine of the gospel) *not in rioting* (or in dancings, *καποίς*) *and drunkenness, not in chambering*

chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying : for these things, says he, are the making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Spend not too much of your precious time in *divertive exercises and recreations*. We may indeed use these not only lawfully but profitably, both with respect to the health and strength of the body, and the vigor even of the mind ; which being unbended for a while with innocent amusements, will be in better case to return again to close thinking. But we must not make recreation our business, as too many do, who are so intoxicated with the secret witchery of gaming, as to have their minds rendered almost incapable of any close application to serious and important matters.

Spend not too much of your time in *company and discourse*, unless business oblige you to do so. The company of atheistical and wicked men, especially if they be witty, and of an ingaging temper, carries commonly an infection with it ; and their discourse breaths a secret and insinuating poison, that every one has not a strong enough antidote in his nature to resist. And though the company we associate ourselves with be good, yet we are to remember the old saying, *Amici sunt fures temporis*, that friends are frequently the thieves that rob us of our time ; the commodity that of all others we are to be most parsimonious of, seeing we can never retrieve its loss. To visit friends, is often a great duty ; but it is frequently to the hurt both of the visitors and visited that these are made. For as much time is commonly lost this way to no purpose, so the discourses that are the entertainment of most companies, are too often mere vanity, if not worse : for it is too customary at such times to give way to foolish talking and jesting, or to censorious reflections upon other persons. There is an innocent freedom indeed, and facetiousness in discourse, which is both allowable and pleasant : but alas, how soon doth this

Mat. 12.
36.

degenerate, if great care be not taken to keep our minds in a right poize? And if I appear to any to be rigid in what I say on this head, let it be remembered, that Christ has forewarned us, *That we must give an account of every idle word*, as well as unwarrantable action, *in the Day of Judgment*. As therefore we are to avoid moroseness on the one hand; so we are to take care that we tire not our friends by too frequent or too long visits. There are indeed some such friends in the world, though very rare to be found, who the more they are together, do the more love and profit one another. But as to ordinary friends, the case is quite otherwise: in relation to whom Solomon gives this wise advice; *withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house, lest he be at last weary of thee, and so hate thee*: that is, according to the gloss of some upon the words; make thyself precious; wear not out every man's threshold, by obtruding thyself upon them; neither make thyself vulgar and cheap, as a mean commodity, that is every man's money.

Prov. 25.
37.

But remember also, that ye may be guilty of mispending your time in *vain and unprofitable musings*, as well as in vain discourse, Idle thoughts are as foolish a mispence of time as idle words: for every sort of thinking and meditating is not judicious no more than holy. And though a man think not upon his lusts, he may think very impertinently, and consequently sinfully.

Acts 17.
21.

And this is not only the fault and weakness of *plebeian*, but of learned heads, who mispend time frequently as much as any other sort of men, upon their *difficiles nugæ*, their useless, yet painful curiosities and niceties. This was the custom of the *learned doctors of old Athens*, who spent their days in almost nothing else, *but telling or hearing some new notion, scheme, or theory*; and then disputing, *pro & contra*, for and against it. But while they were earnest to dispute about *forma substantialis, universale à parte rei, fuga vacui*,

vacui, apathy's, the possibility of motion, and such like nuga and whims, they forgot God and solid religion; and were such sceptics, or superstitiously ignorant (for ye may interpret the words either way) that in the midst of their multitude of gods, they were willing to erect one altar more, with this inscription, *ver. 23, Ἀγνοῦμεν, To the unknown God.* It is true indeed, there are many curiosities of this kind, that a wise man may improve to great advantage. But when they are made our main or only business and study, instead of being *parergon's*, or by-study's, we are certainly far out of the road of true wisdom. What profit has the *metaphysician*, in abstracting from all particular beings, that he may define *ens* generically, as *unum, verum, bonum*, while he is ignorant of him that is truly such. To how little purpose at length will the *mathematician* find he has studied, in order to adjust and determine the proportions of points, lines, sides and angles, if he neglect the proportions of piety and virtue? What will it avail the *astronomer* to see the planets through a tube, if he fall short of the happy world at last that is above all these? Is any man the better for being able to adjust and reconcile the *Egyptian, Chaldee, and Grecian Dynasties*, by reducing all the different *eras* of nations to the *Julian period*, while he neglects to number his own days so, as to apply his heart to true wisdom? And lastly, what advantage has any man, by being able to speak all the languages in the world, while he worships and praises God in none of them?

Nay, I tell you further, that a man may even mispend his time in the *service and worship of God, circumstantially considered.* For though we worship God, yet what advantage can we reap by it, if we do so ignorantly, or hypocritically, or customarily, and merely for the fashion, or profanely and irreverently, or dully and heartlessly? Nay, we may lose our labour this way also, when by this we thrust out more immediate incumbent and necessary duties; or when

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we neglect the performance of this, till we be altogether unfit for it, offering thus to the Lord a corrupt thing while we have a male in our flock.

Prov. 23.
4. 5.

And if thus we may mispend time, how much more are we like to do so, while *the cares of the world*, and the inordinate desire of what we call it's *pleasures, profits, and honours*, jostle out religion, both from our thoughts and lives? *Solomon* adviseth us, *not to labour to be rich*; but he immediately subjoins, *cease from thy own wisdom*. Whereby he insinuates, that a

Prov. 28.
22.
* P. 20.

man must be mortified to his carnal and wordly ratiocinations, and taught by the Spirit of God to know the true value of things, before he can possibly learn this lesson from him. However he positively determines these two things, *That he that hasteth to be rich, hath an evil eye*; and *that he that does so, shall not be found to be innocent*; mottos that all men might find it convenient to write on the head of their books of accounts: and if *Solomon's* words have little effect upon you, consider what a greater than *Solomon* says of a covetous or anxiously solicitous disposition and practice, in the 6th chapter of *Matthew*, where he represents and condemns it as *unchristian and heathenish*, and as *unreasonable and pernicious*. And, after all, remember these serious and pungent words of his, *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Mat. 16.
26.

And now I hope I have said enough as to the things we ought to avoid, if we would rightly improve our time: but seeing it is not sufficient to know how time is lost, unless we know also what we are to be occupied about, and wherein the best and wisest disposal of our time stands; therefore we must further consider the great and necessary duties with which we ought to fill up the seasons and vacuities of our life.

And therefore I proceed now to

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The 2d part of this great and principal direction concerning the improvement of our time; which is this, *That we take care to fill it up with the conscientious and diligent discharge of all necessary duties.*

And here, though in the general we cannot but know, that our time is wholly to be taken up *in getting and doing good*; yet we must remember, that it is only in relation to time that we are to consider our duties in this place. And therefore I am only to consider here those great and necessary duties which are always obligatory upon us, and the neglect of which is inseparable from the mis-improvement of time. For it cannot be supposed that I should so much as hint all those things that come under the general notion of duty; or consider those things which particular circumstances and emergents render obligatory to us, or such duties which are called *relative*, from the stations we are in, and the relations we bear to others.

There are therefore a few things only which I shall recommend to you as altogether useful and necessary, and which none of us can ever plead exemption from.

And in the *first* place, let me beseech you to improve your time, by frequent, diligent and serious reading and studying the Holy Scriptures. In the *first book* of which ye will find your minds led up to the first antiquities, which no other book beside can furnish you with any just account of. There we see the origin of man and the world; man's primeval state, when first created; the original of sin, death and misery; the subversion of the first race of men, by the great deluge which heathen antiquities speak of only as through a cloud; the first spring and dawning of mercy and hope to lapsed man; the succession of the first and most primitive Church, and the beginning and progress of *Gentile* idolatry, superstition and wickedness; together with the first original of
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nations, cities, arts, governments, languages: and in all these the superintending Providence of God, in it's justice and goodness, wisdom and steadiness. And by this knowledge we bring back, as it were, all past time, and make it our own as to our profit and advantage. In the *other Books of Moses*, we have an account of God's erecting a poor oppressed people to be a Church, and God's peculiar possession: wherein we see his wonderful appearance for them, by signs and miracles; his strange and unusual way with them in all their journey, in trying, feeding, and preserving them; his giving them laws ecclesiastical, moral and political; his wrapping up most profound mysteries under ceremonies and customs, and his bringing them into a noble country with power and glory, destroying their enemies before them; together with innumerable observable occurrences, and theoretical and useful things to be taken notice of therein. The *historical part of the Old Testament*, that follows that of the law, as the *Jews* call it, gives us a relation of most admirable and great revolutions and transactions as ever fell out in the world. Wherein we may observe the various, and yet uniform steps of Divine Providence in governing the world and the Church; God's trying, and yet rewarding the righteous; his permitting sin, and yet punishing sinners. In all which occurrences we have the best examples that can be to be imitated by us, and an account of the worst also, that we may avoid such pernicious courses. The *book of Job* is a mirror, wherein we may learn what afflictions the best men are liable unto, and what reproaches they may unjustly fall under even by good men like themselves, through mistake and infirmity: as also, how we ought to behave in the time of calamity; and what the end of the Lord at length usually is. The *Psalms* are the most excellent model of practical and experimental piety, and the best prayer-book and directory

directory for devotion that ever the world was blessed with. The *Proverbs* of Solomon are the most excellent and refined ethics that were ever published, or ever will be. *Ecclesiastes* is the noblest picture and demonstration of the world's vanity. And *Solomon's Song* the most spiritual pastoral, the finest allegory, and the divinest poetical description of the love between Christ and devout souls that ever saw the light. The *prophetical writings* give us the noblest and distinctest idea of God's government of nations, and the righteousness and equity of all his providences and administrations; besides innumerable other lessons to be learned from thence.

And as for the *New Testament*, the first thing that occurs to us, is the most excellent part of the whole Bible; I mean, the *fourfold history of our blessed Saviour*. O, let your thoughts dwell long, and strike deep here; for all the historical passages of the Gospels, all the wise and sage parables to be found there, all the miracles wrought, all the prophecies mentioned, all the truths revealed, and all the counsels and exhortations there given; I say, all these are as so many rich veins of what is more precious than the finest gold, and admirable and useful above all thought. The book of the *Acts of the Apostles* gives us a noble and impartial account of the beginning and progress of the gospel, and the first settlement of the Church: wherein we have a naked and clear view of Christianity in its pure and primitive dress; together with some most profitable examples, and useful discourses. The *Apostolical Epistles* give us a full and copious account of the religion of the blessed Jesus, both in its principles and practice, its original and design. So that these are sufficient alone, if rightly understood, to enlighten our minds, to influence our affections and designs, and to regulate our lives and conversations. And the book of the *Revelation*, though dark and enigmatical, represents to

us, in an august and lofty manner, the rectorship of our Lord Jesus in governing the world, over-ruling and disposing the designs and actions of men, and making all things at length work together for the illustration of his own glory, and his people's good.

2 Tim. 3.
15.

Thus we see something of the special properties of the several parts of the Scripture, and what excellent things may be learned from thence. But let us consider also those properties that are common to the whole Bible, and every part of it. Let us therefore look upon all the books that compose this sacred volume, as *divinely inspired, and as designed, in all respects, for our profit and edification*. Therefore let us read and study them, *not as the word of men, but as they are indeed the Word of God; i. e.* so as to prize and value them according to their worth; to love and delight in them; to praise God for them; to meditate upon them as men, not as children; and to conform our lives wholly to them. And in order to become thus the humble, impartial, and obedient scholars of Christ, let me put you in mind of one thing, than which nothing is more neglected, and yet nothing more necessary in order to profit truly by the Bible, *viz.* That ye have a care of laying down any opinion or scheme of opinions in matters religious, previously to your having impartially examined the sacred Scriptures in such matters. For they that do so, come not to be taught of God, but to dictate to the Almighty, and are not afraid often to wire-draw the sacred text, in order to force it to speak, not what it really does, but what they would have it do, as best suits with their prejudices, passions, and party-designs, that I say not lusts also. Therefore let me desire you (as I have often done from the pulpit) to make the *Bible itself*, and particularly the *New Testament*, your chief (and in a proper sense only) *system, confession of faith, and creed*. For whatever excellency there is in any human compositions of this kind,

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we are to own them no farther than we find them to agree and harmonize with the divine oracles.

In the next place, let us improve our time, by frequent, serious, and close meditation on divine and profitable things. Let the character of the blessed man, *Psalms* 1. 2, 3. be our's, by our meditating on the laws and truths of God day and night. For to what purpose do we read the Scriptures, and other good books, if we be not at pains to penetrate into the things therein contained? Now it were endless, and in some sense impossible to name all those things that may be profitably thought upon. But perhaps it may not be amiss to suggest to you the principal heads of sacred theology; by which, as so many avenues, ye may attain mentally to converse with God and truth.

In the first place then, meditate on God himself, his attributes, works and word, and the blessed Persons of the Godhead. *Then* think on man in his first innocent state, in his lapsed condition; and begun recovery; and on thyself particularly, thy nature, thy faculties, thy state, thy faults, thy end, thy duties, and thy privileges and advantages. Meditate *often* on Jesus Christ, his person, his properties, his offices, his merits, his sufferings, his conquest, his business and work now in heaven, and his management of the Church on earth, and the world in general. *Then* think of the Holy Spirit, his office, work and influences. *And* let the Church also be considered in it's obligations, ordinances, sufferings, progress and victory. *And* think *likewise* of the particular state of the saints of God on earth, their temptations, the principles by which they are acted, their conversation, and the promises made them. *Hence* let your minds be led in to contemplate the great blessings of true religion, such as conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, communion

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with God, the prelibations of heaven, and final perseverance. And *then* let your thoughts terminate upon what we call the last things. Think *therefore* on death, it's certainty; yet the uncertainty of the time of it; the great change it brings upon us, how terrible it will be to be unprepared for it, and the happiness of being ready for so great a change. *Then* think upon the dissolution of this world, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and this vast pile of our planetary world become one great bonfire. And *from thence* let your minds contemplate the great Day of Judgment, those grand assizes, where all mankind must be impartially judged, and sentence be pronounced upon them accordingly. And *after all* let your thoughts pass beyond the limits of time, and step in to the eternal state. *There* go down to the infernal prison for a while, and view the horrors of the place, the frightful aspect of the company, and the intenseness and perpetuity of the torments. *Then* mount the steep ascent, and soar aloft upon the wings of contemplation, to the blissful regions of the celestial paradise. There satiate your thoughts with the pleasures and beauties of the place, the felicity and joys of that state and government, the excellency of the company, the glory of the discoveries made there, the noble employment that takes them up, and the eternity and immutability of all these. Think *then* upon these few hints, my friends (where there are almost as many subjects as words) and ye can never want matter for your thoughts to work upon.

And *now*, seeing all our study and meditation must be so managed, that we may receive some real and abiding advantage, let us ever call ourselves to a serious and impartial account as to the spending of our time: for how can we satisfy ourselves, without conversing with our own souls, in order to know how it is with them? And how can we attain to know ourselves,

ourselves, if we never examine and try how it is with us? If merchants, and men of business, are so careful to set down every thing in their journals and books of account, that they may be able exactly to ballance what they call their *debit* and *credit*, their losses and gains; ought not Christians to mind their eternal concerns, with the like exactness and accuracy? How wonderfully does *Seneca* speak on this head, when he tells us, that in imitation of one *Sextius*, whom he highly commends, he had been accustomed to examine himself every night? "When at night, says he, "the candle is out, and all is still and quiet, "then do I look back upon, and search all the day "past, by measuring and running over all I have "thought, said or done. I hide nothing from myself; I overlook and pass by nothing. I say to "myself, so and so thou hast done unadvisedly; do "so no more. And again, I ask myself, What evil "have I healed? what vice have I resisted? what "passion have I moderated? what lesson have I "learned? and what good have I done? And O, says he, "what a sweet sleep follows, after this recognition of a man's self, when one is conscious of "his impartiality and seriousness, in the review and "censure of himself and his own manners!"

And to this purpose we find an excellent direction in the *golden verses*, as they are called, of old *Pythagoras*; which begins thus, *Μηδε υπνον, &c.* The sense of which I render thus:

*Before thine eyes to slumber sweet give place,
Be sure the past day's journal first to trace.
Survey thy steps and actions all: then say,
Which good? which bad? how ordered were they?*

O then, my friends, let not it be said of us that we live in the neglect of this duty, lest Heathens rise up in judgment against us and condemn us.

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But *since* we are not born for ourselves only, let us be concerned to promote the good of others also. Let us therefore improve time, by being useful in our stations to the Church of God and good men, and to all as far as we can: for so we are obliged, as we are members of communities, cities and nations; and as we are inhabitants of the world. And in order to be thus useful, let us set before ourselves the glorious example of Christ, *whose meat and drink it was to do the will of his Heavenly Father, and who went about always doing good.* And therefore let us be ashamed to live as useless plants in the world, which do only cumber the ground.

Eph 6. 16.
1 Theff.
5. 17.

And *in order* to perform all these things aright, and so to improve our time to the best advantage, let us be sure to spend as much of our time in prayer as possibly we can: for as it is thus that we attain to most immediate and direct communion with God; so it is this way that we attain to be strengthened and directed in the performance of all the duties we are obliged to be taken up in. Therefore let us remember, that it is not without just ground that we are commanded *to pray always, and to pray without ceasing.* The sense of which expressions I take to be this; that as we are to keep up stated times of solemn prayer to God, and to have recourse to him, in a more special manner, upon extraordinary emergents and occurrences, in order to be peculiarly directed and assisted then from God; so we are ever to keep ourselves, as much as possibly we can, in a praying frame, and for this end to fill up all the vacuities of other affairs and studies with ejaculatory prayers and breathings. But besides all these things, there is one thing further that I never found any writer take notice of, that I look upon to be the principal design of such expressions; and this is, that we be careful to prosecute the design of our prayers from one time of our life to another, waiting for the answer of them, and improving the same in praise, when received; e. g.

If a Christian pray long for a full victory over such or such a temptation or lust, let him prosecute this design in all his prayers until he receive an answer; which, when he has got, let him turn this from the catalogue of his petitions to that of his thanksgivings. And so let him act also, with respect to mercies to be received, promises to be fulfilled, and miseries to be averted.

And *thus* I have at length finished the *first and principal rule* I had to propose to you, with respect to the improvement of time in both the parts thereof. And now I am to hint to you *two more*, which are only subservient ones; though, at the same time, worthy of your most serious thoughts.

The (2d) *Rule* therefore is, *That* in order to the right improvement and disposal of time, we do both dedicate ourselves solemnly to God, and as explicitly as we can, in order to spend our lives wholly in his service; and be concerned, in order to this, to keep a secret and exact register or diary of all our own actions, and the providences of God in relation to us.

But seeing I have hinted something in relation to both the parts of this rule in another discourse, *viz. That concerning the ministerial work*; I shall not therefore trouble you with any thing more upon either of these heads.

Only let me say this onething further, in relation to the keeping of a diary or private register; that every man must be left to his own discretion as to the manner and method of adjusting those things that occur to him in his life. As therefore some may think it best to set things down according to the series of the time they fall out in: so others may look upon the method of heads, or common places, to be the best. And if any serious person shall think this last way the best (for as to the first the method cannot be mist), he may perhaps find these heads not unreasonable or useless, *viz. That* after a short series of his

his life, to be further continued, he proceeds in this order.

1. To consider God's providence to him, in adapting and disposing of him for particular ends, agreeably to the faculties of his soul, and constitution of his body, together with his external circumstances, in a relation to both.

2. What his conversion has been, with the time and manner of it.

3. How far, and in what way he has been led in to covenant with God, with the renovations of the same.

4. What crosses and troubles he has met with, and how far these have been improved and sanctified.

5. The dangers, spiritual or temporal, he has been delivered from.

6. The sins he is most inclinable unto naturally, and those he has been most guilty of and overcome by.

7. How frequently, in what manner, and upon what occasions, he has been deserted by his God; and, so far as he can conclude, for what ends these have happened to him.

8. What evidences he has had of the wrath and displeasure of God, upon the account of sin.

9. And what intimations he has met with of the love and kindness of his Heavenly Father.

10. What temptations, inward or outward, he has been most assaulted by, and what he has found to be the best antidote and relief against these.

11. What observations and experiences he has met with, to confirm him in the belief of the Christian religion, as to the being of God, the divinity of Christ, and the existence of invisible powers.

12. What observable and remarkable things have happened to him, in his business, studies, or converse with men, that may be of use to himself or others, as to life and conversation in the world.

13. Parti-

13. Particularly, what has occurred to him in the remarkable turns and changes of his life, in health and sickness.

14. What intimacy, familiarity and communion God has graciously admitted him into with himself; and what answers and returns of prayer God has granted him.

And, 15. What special and peculiarly distinguishing circumstances he has been under, wherein the footsteps of a peculiar conduct have been conspicuous to him.

Under these heads I humbly suppose all things may be regularly disposed, that can be thought necessary to compose a private Christian's register. Though I presume not to dictate to any man, but leave every one to follow his own method.

The (3d) and *last Rule* is this, *That* (in order to the right regulation of time) *we set down some short, rational and natural directory, according to which we may be enabled and assisted rightly to improve our time.*

But seeing every one is to compose this, according to his own circumstances, there is no man that can justly prescribe to another in this matter. Nay, there is none that can set to himself such a directory, as to all particulars, that he can be supposed to be tied up to, at all times; since the providence of God is so various this way, that our circumstances render our condition, and consequently our duty almost as different as the weather is. And therefore a *spiritual prudence* is that which is to every one the great directory of his life. For when the providence of God renders our particular rules and methods impracticable, unlawful or inconvenient; it is both our duty and wisdom to fall in with the present circumstances of things, rather than with our own arbitrary determinations; seeing then the state of the question is, *Whether God's method or our's should be followed?*

All therefore that I shall propose to you here, is

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the consideration of three things; which are easily minded, and may be put in practice every day, whatever our circumstances are.

1. When we awake in the morning, let this be among your first thoughts; *How shall I spend this day to best advantage, for the honour of God, and my own good?* And when ye have considered what is most proper to promote these ends; then firmly *propose* to yourselves your business through the day, and fixedly *resolve* upon acting so; and accordingly proceed and fall to work.

2. In the middle of all your business, or studies, allow yourselves some time of breathing, in order to *reflect* upon these two things, *viz. What ye are, and what ye do*; putting these frequently to yourselves by way of query, thus: *What am I? i. e. am I sure I am in favour with God? am I indeed regenerated? am I spiritual in thought, affection, and design?* And again; *What do I? i. e. am I employed as I ought to be? are my ends right? are the means I make use of lawful and proper? are my studies, or my business, such as I ought now to be occupied about? do I behave in all respects as one that is journeying towards the better country?*

3. In the evening sleep not, before ye have examined yourselves, as to the actions and occurrences of the past day. But having spoken already to this duty, I shall only add here, that it will be of great use for you to examine yourselves as to two things, by way of question to yourselves, thus: *What has God's providence been to me this day?* what have I seen or heard that deserves special observation and improvement? what mercies have I received? what troubles have I met with? what dangers have I escaped? did God assist me, or desert me in my devotions and business? have I learned nothing new from his holy Word? did he seem to receive, or shut out my prayers? And again; *What has my way been towards God?* have I done nothing to dishonour him,

him, or to discredit my profession? have I acted so as to approve myself to my God, in thought and design, as well as in word and action? wherein have I failed in my duty? what have I done for religion? and what for my own good, or the good of others? what have I done that I ought to beg the pardon of? and what have I to praise God for?

Now, my friends, I hope these three generals are easy, both to be remembered and practised. For as for the particular questions I have suggested, they are only proposed to shew more fully the design of the general ones: and therefore every one may pick and chuse, or vary from these, as his own circumstances do require, and as his prudence will direct: I only desire you then to remember the three heads themselves, with relation to the morning, the day, and the evening, as they are comprehended in these three *mnenomical* words, *propose*, *reflect*, and *examine*.

And thus I have at length come to the end of that which I had to say to you upon this great and practical head of *improving time to the best advantage*. Which I conclude with these few watch-words. Spend not your time so, as to be afterwards obliged bitterly to repent of what ye have done: spend no time on that which ye cannot review and look back upon with comfort: spend no time so, as ye dare not pray for a blessing from God upon what ye do: spend no time, without some respect to God's glory, or your own and others' good. And be sure so to spend and improve your time, that your great work may be done before your life end; that when your few days are lived over, ye may joyfully enter in upon a happy eternity.

Now, having finished all I had to say, by way of improvement of the Apocalyptical thoughts I have presented you with; I desire ye may candidly interpret my design, and favourably construe my performance. And one thing I hope ye will remem-

ber, that seeing this discourse is by way of epistle, I have therefore used an epistolary freedom, both in what I have said, and in the way of writing, not tying myself up to so close a method as in other discourses, though I have not altogether neglected even that: but if I have failed in any respect, remember further, that I write to those I look upon to be my true, good, and kind friends. Let therefore the name and ties of friendship plead for me, where ye may discern my infirmities, and induce you to pass a favourable sentence upon my attempt to assist you in the way to heaven.

And now, that I write to such dear friends, and have mentioned the ties of friendship, let me beg of you that ye would make it your business to live together as such: for there is nothing Christ has enjoined us more, than mutual love, in so much as he has made it the badge of our Christianity, when he tells us, *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.* And therefore it was ^{*}one great end of his coming into the world, to introduce a *divine and universal friendship among men.* For as the devil promotes his kingdom in the world, by dissensions, emulations, hatred and malice; so our blessed Master carries on his, by union, gentleness, peaceableness, and universal kindness, love and charity.

But besides a general friendship, it would be of great use to cultivate a peculiar one with one or more, whose disposition is most agreeable to our's. And seeing there is little of this now to be found in this selfish age, let me give you such a description of it, as may make you fall in love with it. And if this appear too florid, remember that, as the subject itself is so, it is part of a youthful composition of mine, in a letter to a worthy friend, who had desired my thoughts upon this head many years ago. "True friendship is a divine and spiritual relation of minds, an union of souls, a marriage of hearts, and a har-

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John 13,

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* See Eph.

2. 14, 15,

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“ many of designs and affections: *which being found-*
 “ *ed on a known agreeableness, and entered into by a mu-*
 “ *tual hearty consent, groweth up into the purest kindness,*
 “ *and most endearing love; maintaining itself by the*
 “ *openest freedom, the warmest sympathy, and the closest*
 “ *secrecy.* And such friends are as twins, every way
 “ alike; or like sweet flowers, agreeing in beauty,
 “ though perhaps differing in colour, like the rose
 “ and lily, the primrose and violet, twisted round one
 “ another, and mixing both colours and smells. Or
 “ they may be compared to two pleasant rivulets
 “ flowing from one spring and fountain, though se-
 “ parated perhaps by some unlucky rising of the
 “ ground; yet meeting again in some kind and
 “ flowery mead, which they bless by their chearful
 “ and gentle meanders; and it may be thence sepa-
 “ rated again at some distance, where they glide
 “ along silently, murmuring now and then to one
 “ another, and mutually complaining of the
 “ rude banks that obstruct their joining; until at
 “ length, having run their full course, and becoming
 “ one stream, they pour themselves forth into the
 “ great ocean itself, and become one with it also. So
 “ that, like the rest of the bitter sweets of this life,
 “ friendship has it's ups and downs until it flow into
 “ heaven, from whence it took it's rise: which is the
 “ consummation of all divine friendships, and where
 “ all true friends do at length happily meet, never
 “ to part.”

And now, my friends, I shall conclude this long
 epistle in the words of a * famous doctor and father of
 the antient Church: “ Learn, O faithful and reli-
 “ gious men, and carefully apprehend the design of
 “ the gospel polity. For which end, study to con-
 “ quer fleshly lusts, to be humble in heart, pure in
 “ mind,

— * Basil. Magn. in his ΝΑΔΕΟΙΑ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΨΕΥΣ. The words
 begin thus: ΜΑΔΕ ΟΥ, Ο ΠΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΔΡΩΝ, &c.

“mind, and masters of your passions. If ye are cal-
 “led to suffer, act heroically, and do something over
 “and above mere passiveness, for the honour of your
 “Lord. If ye are unjustly treated, evidence that ye
 “are not contentious; if hated, love your enemies;
 “if persecuted, endure it; and if reviled, answer no
 “man otherwise than by prayer and good wishes.
 “Die to sin, crucify your affections for God, and cast
 “all your care upon your Lord and Master. That
 “thus ye may at length reach the glorious place,
 “where millions of angels, and the glorious assem-
 “bly of the first-born are praising God, and where
 “the holy apostles, prophets, patriarchs, martyrs,
 “and all the righteous are. To this blessed society,
 “let us labour and pray to be joined, through Jesus
 “Christ our Lord. To whom be glory for ever.”

Now, that both ye and I may attain, through
 grace, to be thus happy, is and shall be the serious,
 fervent, and constant prayer of,

My very dear Friends,

London, Jan. 1,
 1701, being the
 first day both
 of the Year
 and Century.

Your's to love and serve you
 in the Gospel of our Lord
 and Saviour Jesus Christ,

ROB. FLEMING.

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P O S T S C R I P T,

CONTAINING

A short Account of the *First Principles of the Apocalyptical Interpretations* advanced in the *preceding Discourse*.

AFTER I had finished the foregoing discourse, and that all the sheets were almost printed, I was earnestly urged by a friend, to say something to secure the foundation I go upon: especially because the learning of *Grotius* and *Dr. Hammond* had influenced many to follow another way of interpreting the Revelation, as the reputation of *Mr. Baxter* had swayed others to think well of the same. And when I urged that *Dr. More*, in his *Mystery of Iniquity*, and *Dr. Cressener*, in his *Demonstration of the First Principles of the Protestant Interpretations of the Apocalypse*, had done this sufficiently already; he replied, that these books were both voluminous and dark, and not easy to be purchased by every one; and that therefore some short account of this matter at this time seemed to be necessary. I urged many things against this, as that this advice came too late, and that should I contract never so much, it would swell this part of my book too much, to keep a due proportion with the other discourses, and indeed make the whole too bulky.

bulky. But after all, importunity and the respect I bore my friend, prevailed with me, to say something to all those things, that he thought I ought to premise. Therefore not to spend any longer time, in giving the reasons, why I did not speak to these things before, in their proper place, or why I do so now; I shall give my thoughts of this book and the first principles of the right interpretation of it, in some propositions, which do gradually lay the foundation of what I advanced before.

I. Proposition. *The Revelation was written by the Apostle John, and is a Sacred and Canonical Book of the New Testament.*

I hope there is no Christian that will dispute the truth of this proposition with me. For, besides that the stile of *John* may be easily traced in this book, notwithstanding the difference of the subject from that which he wrote of in his Gospel and Epistles; he does frequently make mention of himself, and that with such peculiar circumstances, as agree with none but the Apostle; as we see *chap. 1. verse 1, 2, 4, 9.* See also *chap. 21. 2. and 22. 8.*

I know indeed that some of the antients doubted of this, as *Caius*, a Latin father, mentioned by *Eusebius*, *Hist. Lib. 3. Cap. 28.* and *Dionysius of Alexandria*, who made a great noise against it for a while, as we see in *Eusebius* also, *Hist. Lib. 7. Cap. 4.* But yet even this man declares that he owns it to be a sacred book, though not written by the Apostle *John*. Wherein he speaks, what we must look upon to be altogether absurd. For if *St. John* be not the author, it must be an imposture, seeing his name is inserted in it, as being the penman. So that if it be not *St. John's*, it is no sacred book. Or if it be a sacred book, the author is none but the beloved Apostle. But the weakness and inconsistency of this denies

Denys his reasons against this book, are sufficiently though briefly exposed by *Monsieur Du Pin*, both in his preliminary Dissertation to his *Bibliothèque des auteurs Ecclesiastiques*, and in his *History of the Canon of the Books of Scripture*.

And if this were any argument against the divinity of this book, that some persons have doubted of it, or denied it to be canonical, there is hardly one book in the New Testament that would stand the test: seeing we find in the antient Church-History that there have been not only particular men, but even sects of them, that have excepted, some against one book, and some against others. And we know that the Epistles of *James* and *Jude*, and the second and third Epistles of *John*, and that admirable Epistle to the *Hebrews*, have been controverted, as well as the *Apocalypse*: of the authority of which neither Papist nor Protestant, *Grecian* nor *Armenian* Christian, doubts at this day.

And as all Christians do now acquiesce in the Revelation, as a canonical book: so excepting those I mentioned, and the hereticks called *Alogians*, all the eminent Fathers of the Church received it of old. So did *Justin Martyr*, Dialog. cum Tryph. *Irenæus* lib. 4. cap. 37. and 50. and lib. 5. cap. 30. and apud Euseb. lib. 5. cap. 8. *Tertullian*, adv. Marc. lib. 3. cap. 5. *Clemens Alexandrinus*, apud Euseb. lib. 3. cap. 23. *Origen* in Mat. and in Joh. and apud Euseb. lib. 6. cap. 25. and *Eusebius himself*, Hist. lib. 4. cap. 28. Nay, all the other fathers agree in this also, viz. *Epiphanius*, *Victorinus*, *Theophilus*, *Cyprian*, *Methodius*, *Jerom*; and other authors quoted by *Eusebius*, *Epiphanius*, and *Jerom*, viz. *Melito*, *Hippolytus*, *Victorinus*, &c.

But for my own part, were all these authorities wanting, there is that in this book itself, that would inforce me to own it as divine. For besides the augustness of it's stile, the wisdom of it's contexture,

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and the purity of it's design and counsels, there is something that I want a name for, that commands my belief and veneration, and insinuates itself into my affection and conscience, as if Christ himself breathed something divine in every line. But the clear view of the fulfilling of the several parts of it's prophecy, is an argument that even several other books of the New Testament want.

II. Proposition. *The book of the Revelation of John was written after the destruction of Jerusalem.*

The notion of *Grotius*, upon which his interpretation of the *Apocalypse* is founded, is this; That the *Seven Kings or Heads of the Beast*, mentioned *Rev. 17. 10*, are not to be understood of seven several forms of government, but of seven particular emperors, viz. *Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian* and *Titus*, and that *Domitian* is the eighth, who was of the seventh; because, as he pretends, he governed during his father's absence.

The foundation which he lays, for the probation of this, is that *John* was banished into *Patmos*, in the reign of *Claudius*: but that though he saw his visions then, he did not write them till *Vespasian's* time. For he must make this *last supposition*, as well as the *first*, else his notion would be condemned immediately, seeing it is said, that *five of these kings were fallen*, *Rev. 17. 10*, that is, *says he and Hammond*, when he wrote, not when he *saw* these visions. But how false this is, any body may see with half an eye; seeing these words are not *John's* but the *Angel's* to him. And therefore the defenders of this opinion must find out *five emperors* that were fallen before *Claudius*, if they will restrict these *Heads of the Beast* to particular men: for if the angel spake these words to *John* in the days of *Claudius*, they must relate to them that went before, or to none.

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This is enough to destroy this notion of their's, and I know not how it is possible for any of their admirers to salve their credit this way. But seeing the principal thing they found upon, is this, that *John* saw the Apocalyptical visions in the days of *Claudius*, and that so all, or at least most of the *Revelation* relates to things that fell out before the destruction of *Jerusalem*; I shall say something further to disprove this assertion, and to confirm the verity of our proposition.

Now there are only two things adduced by *Grotius* and *Hammond* to prove, that *John* was in *Patmos* in *Claudius* his reign: the 1st is, that *Claudius* raised a persecution against both *Jews* and Christians, and that being the first persecutor, it is probable that *John* was banished at that time. The second is, that *Epiphanius* does expressly assert, that it was by *Claudius* that *John* was banished to *Patmos*.

As to the 1st of these, it is nothing but a supposition, without any proof; for we have no account, either in the Acts of the Apostles, or in any other writer, that *Claudius* did ever persecute either *Jews* or Christians. And *Lactantius de Mort. Pers.* does expressly assert, that no Emperor did persecute the Christians before *Nero*. It is true, *Suetonius* says, *Claudius Judeos impulsore Chresto tumultuantes Roma expulit*. And *Luke* tells us, that *Claudius* banished the *Jews* from *Rome*, which occasioned *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, and other Christian *Jews*, to retire from *Rome*: but neither of them say that he persecuted the Christians, or even the *Jews*. Now, as for the expression of *Suetonius*, *impulsore Chresto*, or *Chresto*, the meaning must be this, that the *Jews* that did not believe, going about to stir up the government at *Rome*, as they did every where else (as is plain from the Book of the Acts) against the Christians, and appearing against them in a tumultuous manner, upon the occasion of *Christ*; complaints might probably be brought to the Emperor,

peror, who no doubt, upon this account, banished all of that nation from *Rome*: so that *Suetonius* having a confused notion of Christ, might easily be induced to express himself this way. And now that this was all that *Claudius* did against the Christians; is plain to me from one argument that has escaped *Dr. More*, but is to me unanswerable, taken from the 18th chapter of the Acts; where, after the sacred historian had taken notice of *Claudius* his banishing the *Jews* out of *Rome*, and of *Aquila* and *Priscilla's* being lately come upon that account from *Italy* to *Corinth*; he tells us of *Paul's* lodging with them, because he was of the same occupation. But being pressed in spirit, to preach Christ, upon the coming of *Silas* and *Timothy* from *Macedonia*, he goes into their Synagogue, and reasons with the *Jews* and profelytes there, upon this head: and having converted some, particularly *Crispus*, the chief ruler of the Synagogue, and *Justus*, in whose house he afterwards disputed; *Crispus* no doubt being thrown out of his office, and *Sosthenes* put in his stead, and *Paul* continuing to preach in *Justus* his house, which joined to the Synagogue; the *Jews* are incensed to such a degree, as to rise tumultuously against *Paul*. *Sosthenes* therefore the new chief ruler of the Synagogue, and the rest of the unbelieving *Jews*, make an insurrection, and seize upon *Paul*, and carry him to the Judgment-Seat, before the Proconsul *Gallio*, that excellent *Roman*, the elder brother of *Seneca*. He tells the *Jews*, that if *Paul*, or any other man, were guilty of what was lewd, wicked, or unjust, that in that case he was obliged to punish such persons according as the *Roman law* and justice did require. But seeing they accused *Paul* of nothing of that kind, but only of doctrinal matters, relating to their own law and religion, he had nothing to do with them; and therefore he drove them all away, and set *Paul* at liberty, which made the *Gentiles* fall upon *Sosthenes*, the chief author of this tumult,
and

and beat him before the Judgment-Seat; which *Gallio* permitted to be done and connived at, either as judging that he did deserve to be so treated, or as supposing it might prevent the *Jews* from acting so factiously and tumultuously again. Now, after this short, but exact account of this history, it will be easy to see how precarious and groundless, nay false, *Grotius's* opinion is, of a persecution being raised against *Jews* and Christians, in the days of *Claudius*. For if there had been any such thing, or any edict for it, how came *Gallio* to tolerate a public Synagogue of the *Jews*, and suffer *Paul* to preach openly? or, if the Christians were only ordered to be persecuted, why did not the *Jews* use this, as the reason of their accusing *Paul*, who to be sure wanted not a goodwill to have done so, and were not ignorant that this would have been the main argument to prevail with the Proconsul? And had there been any such edict, can we imagine that *Gallio* was ignorant of it? for so he must have been, seeing he tells the *Jews*, that he had no orders to punish any man for his religion or sentiments that way, but only those that were guilty of wickedness or lewdness in life. If any say, that his temper was *to care for none of these things*? I answer, this expression may indeed denote his temper; but I suppose it speaks forth not only that, but his principle and sentiment, as judging it unrighteous to persecute, or punish any man for mere opinion. But, whatever this had been, had there been any edict for persecuting the Christians or *Jews*, he durst not have neglected his orders, especially when the edict must have been so recent, and when he had what might have past for a just reason of his punishing both the party accusing, and the party accused, viz. their disturbing (as he might have represented it) of the public peace. But indeed it is too plain to need any further proof, that *Claudius* his banishing the *Jews* out of *Rome*, was accompanied with no persecution,

persecution, either against them or against the Christians. And this Dr. *Hammond* confirms, by what he says in his annotations on the 31st verse of the 26th chapter of the *Acts*, forgetting, that this way he destroys his own foundation of interpreting the Revelation: where, upon these words of *Luke*, that *Agrippa*, *Festus*, and *Berenice*, and the rest of the company, after they had heard *Paul's* defence, did conclude, that he had done nothing that deserved either death or imprisonment; the doctor observes, that the reason why they did conclude so was, because there had been as yet no edict emitted against the Christians, by any of the emperors: and this was the reason also, says he, why *Gallio*, the Proconsul of *Achai*, said publickly, that it was not for him to judge of things that the *Roman* laws had determined nothing about: for, continues the doctor, though *Claudius* had commanded the *Jews* to leave *Italy*, by which the Christian *Jews* were forced to go away also, not as they were Christians, but because they were *Jews*; yet there was yet no law made against Christians, as such, at this time. It is true, he says, that *John* was not only banished, as *Aquila* and *Priscilla* were, but confined in the Isle of *Patmos*. But he should have given the reason, why *John* was the only person persecuted: however I shall examine this assertion, and the reason that the doctor gives for it in other places of his annotations.

We come therefore now, in the 2^d place, to consider the testimony of *Epiphanius*, upon whose credit alone *Grotius* and *Hammond* believe that *John* was in *Patmos*, in *Claudius's* time. And here by the way, I cannot forbear to observe the strange mistake of Dr. *Lightfoot*, who agrees in the main with these learned men, in interpreting the Revelation, in relation to the *Jews* before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and therefore makes *John* to see these Visions long before that; but has this peculiar to himself, that he
imagines

imagines *John* was not banished there, but went thither voluntarily to preach the gospel to the inhabitants; whereas *John* himself doth expressly tell us, that he was there as a sufferer and witness for Christ, chap. i. v. 9. *I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ:* So that as this refutes Dr. *Lightfoot*, and confirms what *Grotius* and *Hammond* agree in, that *John* was not in *Patmos* as a traveller, but as a prisoner and sufferer; so it is enough to refute even them also: for the words do plainly insinuate, that *John* was not the only persecuted man at this time, but that there was then a persecution raised against all Christians in general; and therefore we may be assured that he was not in that island in the days of *Claudius*, in whose time we have proved there was no persecution.

But to return: *Epiphanius* says indeed, That *John* saw his Visions in *Patmos*, in the reign of *Claudius*. Heref. 51. Sect. 12 and 33. But can his single authority weigh down all antiquity, that says the contrary? shall we believe him rather than *Ireneus*, who lived two hundred years before him, and was the scholar of *Polycarp*, the scholar of *John* himself? Now what can be plainer than the words of *Ireneus*, lib. 5. cap. 30. as they are preserved in the original by *Eusebius*, lib. 5. cap. 8. Hist. Eccl. Εἰ γὰρ ἐδὲ ἀναφανδὸν τῶν νῦν κηρύττεσθαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, δι' ἐκείνῃς αὐ ἐρριζήθη τε καὶ τὴν Ἀποκαλύψιν εὐφρακτοῦ. ἔδε, γὰρ πρὸ πολλῶν χρόνων εὐφραδι, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς, πρὸς τὴν τελευτὴν τῆς Δομιτιανῆς ἀρχῆς. That is, if his name (*viz.* that of Antichrist, or the Beast) had been openly to be divulged at this time, it would no doubt have been told by him that saw the Apocalyptical Visions: for it is not a long time since he saw these, but even in some sense, in our own time, *viz.* towards the end of the reign of Domitian. And that *Ireneus* had just reason to say, that *John's* seeing

seeing the Revelation, was almost in his own time, or within the memory of the men of that generation, if not his own also, is plain from chronology: for he being the scholar of *Polycarp*, who was martyred in the year of Christ 167, and being himself put to death in the year 202, if we suppose that he wrote this but ten or twelve years before his death, yet he might justly say, that there was but about an age's difference from his time, and that wherein *John* saw the Revelation: for if *John* was in *Patmos* towards the end of *Domitian's* reign, it could not be sooner, in any propriety of speech, than the year 90, seeing he began his government *An.* 81, and died 96. And who can doubt but *Ireneus* does deliver here, what his master *Polycarp* had told him? for as none knew the history of *John* better than that worthy person, so none had better opportunity to know what related to this matter than *Ireneus*, by reason of his long and intimate acquaintance with him. This seemed a foundation sure enough of old to *Eusebius*: and if some men had not some private ends to promote, by opposing it, might be a sufficient foundation to all men still. Let us therefore hear what this learned historian says on this head: "*In those days*, says *Eusebius* (*viz.* in the days of *Cerdo*, *Ignatius*, and *Simeon*, of whom he had been speaking) *the apostle John, the beloved disciple, was yet alive, inspecting the churches of Asia, having returned after Domitian's death from the island, whither he had been banished. Now that John was then alive, it is enough to adduce the testimony of two persons of great authority, who are worthy of all belief, and were ever eminent for defending the truth, I mean, Ireneus, and Clemens Alexandrinus; the first of whom, in his second book against heresies, speaks thus: All the Presbyters, says Ireneus, who lived familiarly with the apostle John in Asia, do assure us, that they had this related to them from John himself; for he lived with them even*

*Euseb.
Ecl. Hist.
l. 3. c. 23.*

“even unto the times of Trajan. In his third book also, *Irenæus* gives us the same account, in these words; *The church of Ephesus also, which was founded by the apostle Paul, and was afterwards under the care of the apostle John, until Trajan’s time, is an eminent witness of what was delivered to us by the apostles.* And besides him, *Clemens* likewise, says *Eusebius*, does not only take notice of the same time, but gives a particular story relating to him, in that book of his, which bears this title; *what rich man can be saved?*” And then *Eusebius* recites the story at length, which were too long to insert here.

Now if *John* lived to the days of *Trajan*, he must have been a prodigiously old man, according to *Epiphanius*, who says he was 90 years of age in *Claudius* his time. For giving him all the allowance that can be desired, viz. that *John* was so old in the last year of *Claudius*, and that he died in the first year of *Trajan*, he must have been 134 years old at least when he died; seeing *Claudius* died, *A. C.* 54, and *Trajan* did not begin to reign until the year 98, though others say, with more probability, not until *A. C.* 100. Now, besides that it is not easy to believe, that so thoughtful and laborious a man should live so long, the improbability of what *Epiphanius* says, appears further from this; that if in the year 54 from Christ’s birth *John* was 90 years of age, he must have been 36 elder than Christ. And if so, it seems very odd, that Christ should say to him, from the cross, *Man, behold thy mother*, and to *Mary, woman, behold thy son*. For as this seems to say, that he was at least as young as Christ, this account makes him an old man of near 70 years of age at that time. Which as it must suppose *Mary* to be a very aged person of between 80 and 90 at least, so it contradicts the constant and unanimous tradition of the Church, which supposes him to be very young at that time. Whence *Baronius* says, that he was but 25 years old.

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And *Nicephorus* relates, out of an epistle of *Evedius Bishop of Antioch*, that the virgin herself was not then 50; seeing Christ as he asserts, was born when she was but 15 years old.

Lib. 14.
Obfer.
cap. 21.

Whence it appears, how little we ought to trust *Epiphanius*, in opposition to all antiquity besides. Which made *Drusus* say, *scimus omnes Epiphanium in multis graviter hallucinatum*. And upon the same account *Petavius* scruples not to correct him: for where he has it *imperante Claudio*, he writes this short note in the margin, *mendose pro Domitiano*.

But the truth is, though I am not willing to detract from this author's credit, yet I suspect it was not so much an error of judgment as of will, or that which some call a *pia fraus*, that made him desert the tradition of the church in this matter. For his telling us this story is upon the occasion of an objection of the *Montanists* against the Apocalypse, taken from this supposition, that there was no church in *Thyatira*, when *John* writ the Revelation: which it seems, he thought would serve another turn, if he inverted it, by telling them that *John* said so only by way of prophecy. Whence he proceeds to prove the verity and divinity of the book; and therefore thought his argument would be the more cogent, the further he run up the date of the Revelation and *John's* being in *Patmos*. But as this was a poor as well as unlawful shift, so I shall leave him and his authority both, to those that have more time and leisure to consider them further.

For to me there is proof enough from the Revelation itself, to assure us, that it was written in *Domitian's* time. For it is plain not only from *cb. 1. verse 9*, which I touched upon before, but from the strain of all the *seven epistles* which *John* writes to the churches of *Asia*, that at the time of his being in *Patmos* or rather before, there had been a severe persecution upon them. Therefore he tells the Church of *Ephesus*, that she had *laboured and endured, and had*

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not fainted under the troubles that had come upon her, chap. 2. ver. 2. And so the Christians of Smyrna are told of their tribulation, and exhorted not to fear imprisonment or any other thing that they should suffer, v. 9, 10. This being added, that they must expect tribulation for ten days: which by the way is no inconsiderable hint; seeing the persecution of Domitian, from the first beginning of it, lasted about ten years, which in the dialect of St. John are called days. I might mention many other things, but this is plain, that the Church was under persecution every where at that time, if it were only from these and the like expressions, *be thou faithful unto the death; and to him that overcometh wil' I do so and so.* And besides all these things, mention is made of an eminent martyr of the church of Pergamus, chap. 2. ver. 13, whose name was Antipas. For the apostle John, or rather Christ, is so express in relating this, that we may deny any thing in the Bible, if we deny this matter of fact. I am not concerned here with the allegories some fanciful men make upon this name, when they tell us that it signifies as much as *antipater* or *antipapa*: nor have I any thing to do with the stories that later authors tell us of him, as of his being Bishop of Pergamus, and of his being burnt in a brazen bull, with other circumstantial matters relating to his person or death. Let *Aretha* therefore, *Metaphrastes*, *Cedrenus*, *Pererius*, *Surius*, *Baronius*, *Cornelius a Lapide*, and a thousand more be supposed to mistake in their relating this story: yet no man shall ever make me disbelieve what St. John says of this matter. And I must have further proof, than ever I expect to receive, before I can believe that all these authors are mistaken, as to the foundation of their relation; when they unanimously tell us, that this martyr suffered in the reign of Domitian.

And now I suppose I have said enough to prove that John was not in Patmos before the reign of Domi-

tian. And if so, the foundation of *Grotius* and his followers falls to the ground. So that these *Corollaries* must naturally follow from what has been said, and remain as certain truths.

- 1 Corol. *The visions of the Apocalypse, relate neither to the Romish nor Jewish state, before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.*
- 2 Corol. *The Revelation relates to the Church and her adversaries, as to those things that were to fall out after the eversion of the Jewish state.*

Now before I proceed, I must desire the reader to observe the distribution, which Christ himself makes of the subjects treated of in this book, *ch.* 1. *v.* 19, when he commands *John* saying, Γραφον α ειδες, και α εισι, και α μελλει γινεσθαι μετα ταυτα; i. e. *Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter,* Where it is plain three things are distinguished. 1. *The things which John had seen,* viz. the emblems, figures or hieroglyphical representations, that had been objected to his eyes or imagination, from *v.* 12. to *v.* 19. Then 2. *The things which were existent and in being at the time when John was in Patmos,* viz. the churches planted by the Apostles, particularly the seven Asiatick ones, to which *John* had a peculiar relation, and to which he was ordered to direct seven Epistles. And then 3. *The things which were to fall out hereafter,* viz. The prophetic part of the book beginning with the 4th chapter; as is plain from the 1st verse thereof. Where after *John* had written what related to both the former heads; he tells us, that he heard a voice, like the voice of a trumpet, talking with him, and commanding him now to begin and write the things which he was to shew him and represent to him emblematically, which were to be μετα ταυτα, after the expiration of the other things mentioned before, which were

were said then to exist, *viz. the then present circumstances of the Asiatic churches.*

So that this is a sufficient answer to those that object, that this book cannot be supposed to contain a prophecy of the state of the Church for any long time, seeing it is said, that the *things prophesied of in the Revelation must shortly come to pass*, chap. 1. v. 1. For seeing we have a double explication of this expression, *viz. chap. 1. v. 19. and chap. 4. v. 1.* I ask, whether we are to stick so to the letter of the first short proposition, as to reject the explication given of it in the following places? It was very proper indeed, when some things in this book did concern the then present state of the church, and some other things that did relate to the future condition of it: to say, as in *chap. 1. v. 1.* that the prophecy related to things that were shortly to come to pass: because not only were those things to be soon fulfilled that concerned the churches of *Asia* at that time; but the other things were then also to enter upon their begun accomplishment. But that we might not imagine that the whole of this book was to be accomplished shortly, we are told, *ch. 1. v. 19. and ch. 4. v. 1.* that what related to future time, was to be accomplished and fall out afterwards. And that accordingly we might see the full extent of this prophecy, we are led down from scene to scene, till we are brought to the end and consummation of all things at last. And now seeing we have proved that this book was written after the destruction of *Jerusalem*, we must desire our antagonists to find out something else, to which they can accommodate all the figures of the Revelation, before we quit our interpretation, merely because they dislike it, though they can offer us nothing in the room of the same. So that until they be able to enlighten our minds, with another scheme than that of *Grotius*, which we have sufficiently, though briefly, refuted: I must be bold

to lay down this further Corollary, which is the same with our first *postulatum* in the preceding discourse.

- 3 Corol. *That the Revelation contains the series of all the remarkable Events and Changes of the State of the Christian Church to the End of the World.*

And the same distribution of this book, into the three parts I have mentioned, lays a sufficient foundation for another proposition also.

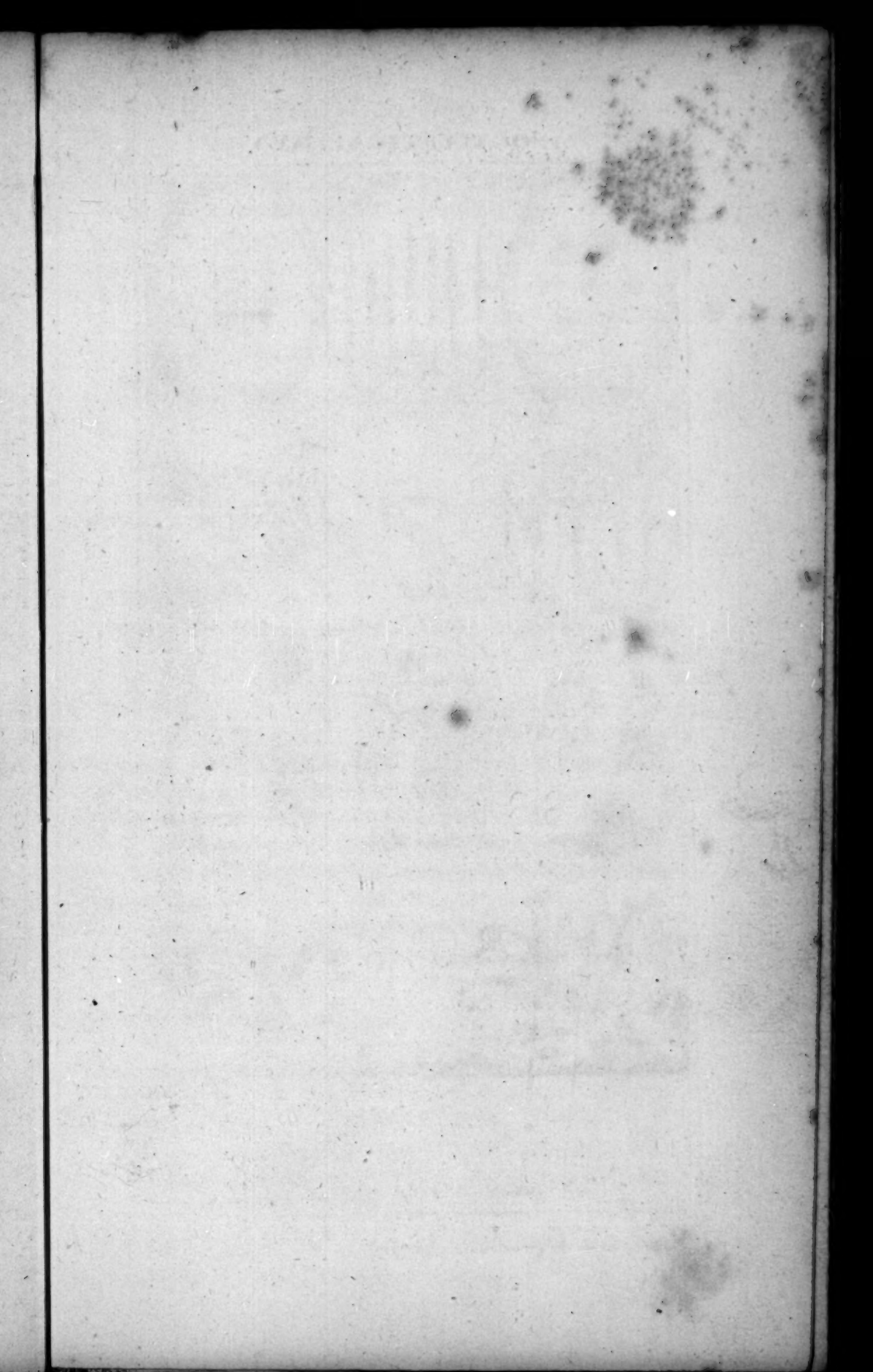
- III. Proposition. *The Seven Epistles directed to as many Churches in the Lesser Asia, do not immediately relate to the Christian Church in general, and therefore cannot be interpreted prophetically, in any proper sense, as if they did denote so many periods of time in relation to it.*

I might demonstrate this, were it needful. But seeing it makes nothing for my design, which way soever men understand it, I shall say nothing to it now; especially because the learned *Witsius*, my professor and master formerly, has sufficiently demonstrated what I assert in this proposition, in his *Diatrise de septem Epistolarum Apocalypticarum sensu Historico & Prophetico*, published in his *Miscellanea Sacra*.

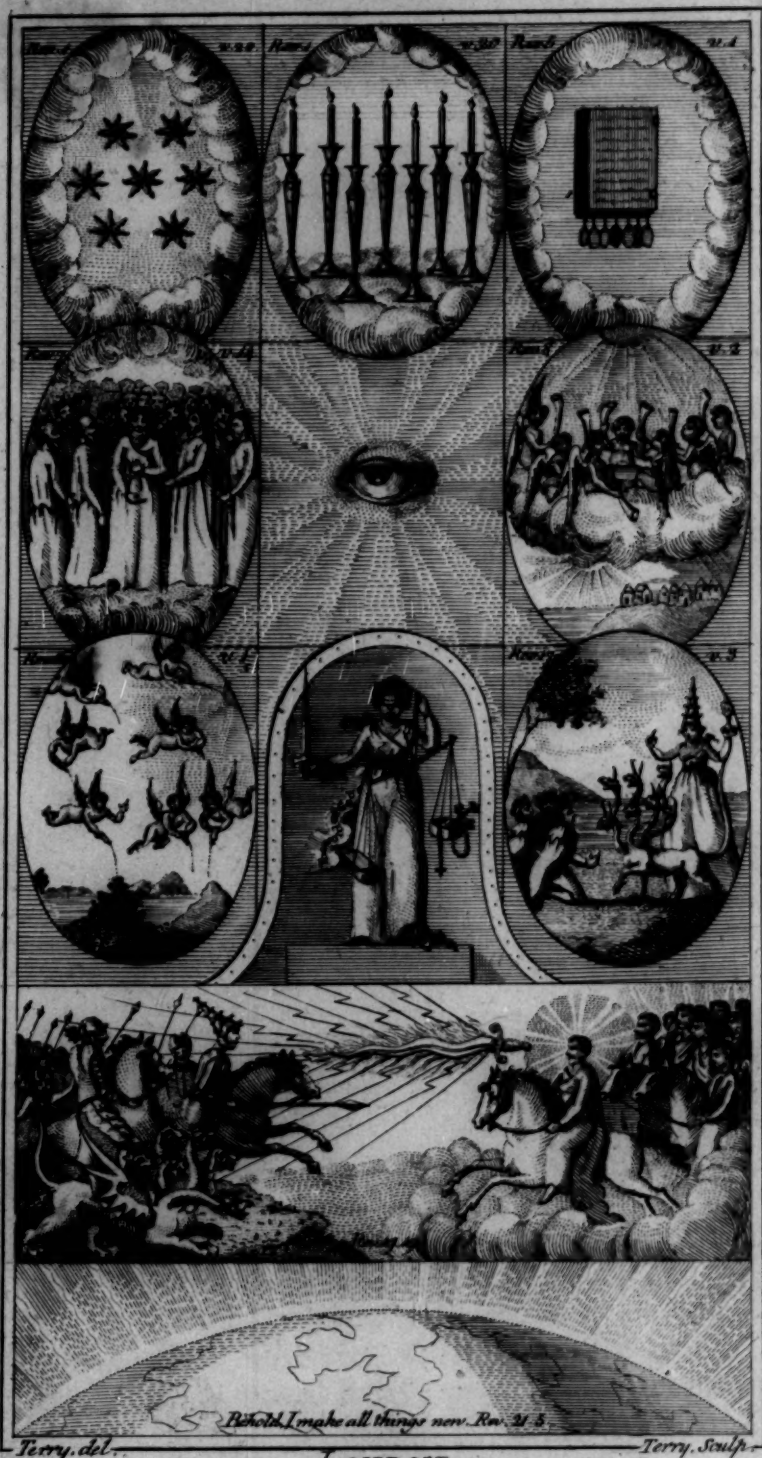
And neither have I time to prove other propositions, that might appear more necessary: only seeing the Key of interpreting the Apocalypse, which the Angel gives *John*, chap. 17. is so very plain, I cannot but build another proposition upon it.

- IV. Prop. *Babylon the great, or the Apocalyptical Beast, taken in a general sense, as it is represented, with it's seven Heads, and ten Horns, is no other than an emblem of the Roman Empire.*

For



APOCALYPTICAL KEY.



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For besides that Dr. Cressener, and others, have proved this, the text itself is demonstration enough to all those that will be at pains, attentively and impartially, to consider it. For seeing the Angel does expressly say, that by this was meant *the seven-hill'd city*, ver. 9. and *the city that then did reign over the Kings of the earth*, ver. 18. I cannot imagine what he could have said more plainly upon this head.

But seeing he represents the Empire, under the peculiar consideration, of it's being governed by a *woman*, who is called *the great Whore, or Adulteress*: therefore this lays a foundation for another proposition.

V. Prop. *The Seven-headed Beast, more especially considered, as it is represented as rid upon by the Whore, doth represent Rome to us as it is under the Ecclesiastical Government of the Papacy, or Apostate Church of Rome.*

This the Angel does sufficiently insinuate, chap. 17. ver. 8. when he says, *The Beast which thou sawest, was, and yet is not at this time*; i. e. The Beast which thou sawest, is indeed the same *Roman Empire* which was before, and was represented to thee, chap. 13. v. 1. But it is not yet, in another sense, viz. as now thou beholdest it under the rule of a *Whore*, or the *Apostate Church of Rome*. For this last Ecclesiastical Form of Government is not yet come, but it is to come (when it ariseth) out of the *bottomless pit*, in order to go thither again, into endless perdition.

And if this be once granted, then that will naturally follow, which I am to represent as another proposition.

VI. Prop. *The seven Kings, represented by the seven Heads of the Beast, are no other than the seven Forms*

Forms of Supreme Government, that did successively obtain among the Romans.

This the Angel doth likewise sufficiently insinuate, *ver. 10*, which can never be understood of particular Emperors, at least not of those *Grotius* fixed upon, whose opinion this way we have already refuted. And therefore seeing *five* of the *Forms* of the *Roman Government*, were fallen in *John's* time, *viz. Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decenvirs, and Military Tribunes*, (as *Tacitus* reckons them, *Annal. lib. 1. sect. 1.*) and seeing the *Imperial authority* was that which was in being then, we have no reason to quit so plain and exact an interpretation. until more be said against it, than ever has been yet produced to the world.

And were it not that I am confined so much now, both as to time, and lest this Postscript should swell to an enormous bulk, I should not fear to attempt the demonstration of these last propositions, and to proceed to others that would lay a further and more strong foundation still, of that method of interpreting the Revelation, which the generality of Protestants are agreed in. But I hope I have said enough for this place, to secure the principles I go upon, by which the things which I proposed at first as *postulata* are, I think, sufficiently proved. And seeing my principal design in writing this Postscript, was to refute the hypothesis that *Grotius* and *Hammond* go upon: I leave it to the candid and impartial thoughts of the reader, whether I have not said enough to prove it to be altogether precarious.

And now seeing every one must see how much I have been straitened, both as to time and paper, in this Postscript, I hope the reader will pass the more favourable construction on what defects he may observe in my performance, either as to *matter, method*, or the *calculations* of time, which I have run upon; in which if there be any thing obscure or confused,

the study of brevity and dispatch has occasioned it. But since I have advanced nothing, in relation to *future time*, but by way of *conjecture*, nor indeed asserted any thing (in relation to that part of the prophecy which is fulfilled) dogmatically and positively, but only proposed my thoughts, after the manner of a *rational probability*; I suppose no man will think it worth his while to make a noise about little mistakes, that perhaps I may have been guilty of, through haste or inadvertency. But if any person shall take occasion, from what I have said, to study the *Apocalypse* to better advantage than I have attained to do, and shall give the world a better built, and more clearly connected scheme of the Visions of this book; I assure him, that none shall more rejoice in such a performance than I, and I shall be one of the first to return him thanks for refuting me. For *truth is all I seek after, and that it may ever, and in all respects prevail, is, and shall be my constant prayer and study.*

In addition to what Mr. Fleming has said relative to the number of the Beast, which is also said to be the number of a Man, the Editor begs leave to remark, as a very singular circumstance, that the title *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which the Popes of Rome have assumed to themselves, and caused to be inscribed over the door of the Vatican, exactly makes the number 666, when decyphered according to the numeral signification of it's constituent letters. Thus,

V I C A R I V S F I L I I D E I .

5 100 1 5 1 50 1 1 500 1

Added together thus:

V	—	5
I	—	1
C	—	100
A	—	0
R	—	0
I	—	1
V	—	5
S	—	0

F	—	0
I	—	1
L	—	50
I	—	1
I	—	1

D	—	500
E	—	0
I	—	1

The number of the Beast 666

N. B.

N.B. To those Subscribers who have sent in
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